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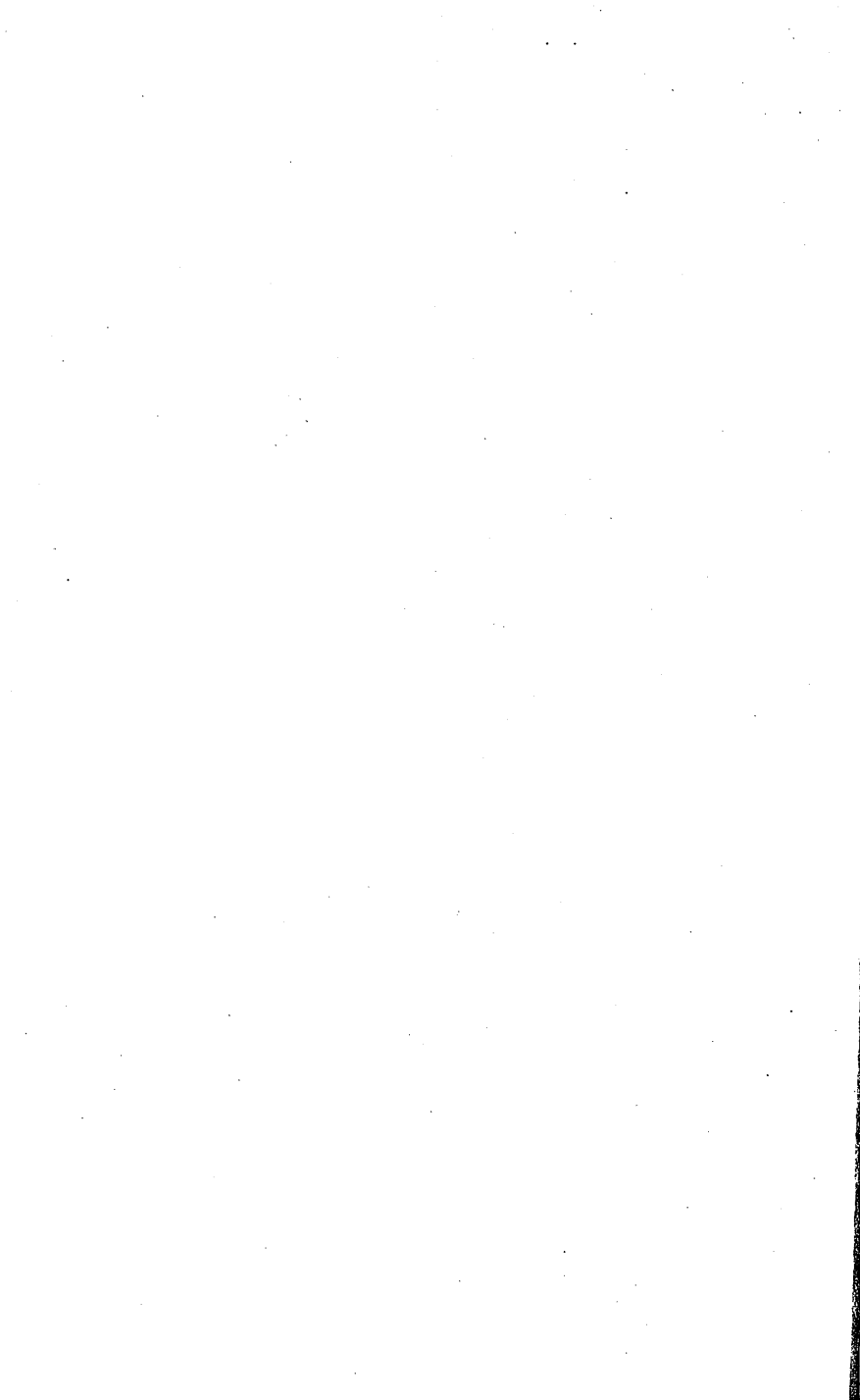
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# CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THINKING

*Seventeen Sermons on the Church's Responsibilities  
in the Period Just Ahead*



# CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THINKING

*Seventeen Sermons on  
the Church's Responsibilities in  
the Period Just Ahead*

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Charles W. Gilkey*

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## FOREWORD

**S**LOW speaking men are saying in measured words that we have come to the end of an epoch. These diagnosticians who have announced the death of the old order are not prophets of gloom, nor are they visionaries. They are stern realists, men whose speech is the result of thought and whose thought is not the effervescence of prejudice, but the careful reasoning from facts widely sought and well apprehended.

Meantime we dwell in chaos made horrible by human suffering and terrible by the spectres of destructive possibility which lurk around us.

Throughout the world the eagles of nationalism are screaming. The militarists have gained or maintained ascendancy in many nations. War flames in the Orient, flashes intermittently in South America and smoulders elsewhere.

Fascism and Bolshevism, each growing in strength and eyeing the other with unconcealed hostility, strive for supremacy in Europe and Asia.

Here in America the devastation of the past few years has laid a heavy burden on our hearts. Our land is strewn with the wrecks of dreams and of visions, of homes and of lives. Unknown numbers of boys and girls roam the country and haunt the vicious sections of the cities learning appalling lessons of vice and crime. Farmers are uprooted from their well-served soil. City dwellers are evicted from their homes. Household goods are dumped in the streets. Families are separated by economic necessity. Health is undermined. Children show the ravages of malnutrition. Men who have al-

## FOREWORD

ways lived by honest effort are forced to beg upon the streets for the meagre food of mere subsistence. Men who have jobs die because they fear to ask for sick leave and men who have no jobs wear out their bodies and their souls in a hopeless quest for work. Slave traders seize upon the bodies of work-starved folk—throw them into the bondage of long hours for an inhuman pittance and set the pace for helpless competitors.

We have little faith in the leaders of yesterday's prosperity. Blind guides they were, and we followed them blindly. Their voices which were oracles but lately are ominously silent now. One looked in vain for a great council of the mighty men to merge their wisdom in the attempt to find solutions for our vast human problems. Were they engrossed in saving their own possessions or were their minds so rooted in the system that had made them great that they were wisdomless when that system failed?

What with "money changers" in our banks speculating with the funds entrusted to them, preaching the sacredness of property while violating the sacred trusteeship of property—with playboys running and ruining municipal government in utter irresponsibility—surely it is a day to bring forth prophets and to lay upon the conscience of religion the challenge of unavoidable responsibility.

Will the Church meet the challenge? Will it bear the world's cross? Will it rise toward the Gospel of its Master? Will it be a power in the shaping of the new day?

The Church will need to rally its utmost energy for the task, energy of heart in ever deepening human sympathy, energy of hand in deeds of healing and of help, energy of mind to grapple with facts and formulate social policies.

The Sermons in this book were not specially prepared.

## FOREWORD

They are glimpses of preachers in action. They are samples of what such men as these are actually saying in regular course and to their own congregations. It will be recognized that not one of these men has said all that he has to say within the brief compass of a single sermon.

It should be noted that eight major denominations are represented in the list of contributors. No assignments whatsoever were made. There was no attempt to divide the field of attack into district sectors. For this reason and because of the alphabetic arrangement according to author—there is no continuity.

Here, no panacea—no formula—no magic word. But here is a comprehension of reality, a grappling with life. Here are voices speaking courage.

ROBERT WYCKOFF SEARLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.

*March 28, 1933*



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IS OUR CIVILIZATION IN JEOPARDY?

*by*

THE REV. WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE, D.D.



*ARE we drawing closer now to great finalities?  
What if we are coming to the end of an era in our  
organized religion?*

*Does organized religion justify its community cost?*

*How much is there, among Christians, of the spirit which  
will submit to discipline, endure suffering, and pledge the  
last full measure of devotion to a spiritual loyalty which they  
place above all else?*

*What obvious perils does our social and economic order  
confront?*

*Have economic paganism and religious respectability been  
walking too often hand in hand?*

*Does any one smoothly suppose that all our difficulties will  
vanish of themselves if we only give them time?*

## IS OUR CIVILIZATION IN JEOPARDY?

by

THE REV. WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE, D.D.

TEXT—Judges x. 13. *Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.*

ONE of the blessings of our Church is its calendar of the Christian Year. From season to season, our thought is led along a growing theme. Now it is Advent; presently it will be Christmas, then Epiphany, and Lent, and Easter, and so on through the year. Neither in our preaching nor in our worship can we easily grow confined to some one note that is monotonous and thin. There is a wholesome variety of suggestion which keeps us from harping spiritually on one string. The mood varies, like the movements of a symphony, through wide ranges of thought and of emotion. After Advent we celebrate the festival of Christmas—that supreme festival of pure wonder, loveliness, and joy. Through the Advent season we catch the foregleams of that joyous Christmas gospel. But in Advent there is another and complementary note. It is the note of warning. The great glory of Christmas cannot be accidentally received. Lightly regarded, it may be lost. In Christmas there is the promise of joy; but in Advent there sound also the deeper bells of judgment. We are being judged to see whether we be fit for Christmas. It is possible that the round of the Christian Year, leading on to its great hopes and bright fulfilments, will not continue forever. Advent suggests that there may come a

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time when God's verdict is rendered upon us, and our opportunity is ended. As in the text which I read just now, there sound the solemn words, "no more."

Think with me today, therefore, of this theme—of life's finalities. May it be that we are drawing closer now to great finalities than we know? We easily assume that things as they are will continue, that essential conditions in church and in state, in our private affairs and in our public life, will not catastrophically change. There may be fluctuations this way and that; but the great landmarks of our life will be unshaken. So we think; but there is another possibility appearing on the horizon now. Its approach is stretching like a shadow over many lands. Its far-off footfalls vibrate through the earth like distant thunder. What if we are coming to the end of an era in our organized religion, and to the end of an era in this whole civilization of the West? What if for us in relation to many of the things we took for granted yesterday the message is,—"no more"?

The sense of finality, when once it comes, is an unforgettable thing. I think of one illustration of it from my own memory of a day not long ago. It was that day at the end of August when tens of thousands of people in a little strip of country which ran through New England and southern Canada were waiting for an eclipse of the sun. With many others I had gone to the top of a high hill in Maine. There beneath us stretched a wide expanse of hill-slope, and meadows, and more hills, leading far off to the range of the White Mountains lifted against the sky. At the minute predicted, a tiny notch of shadow appeared upon the disc of the sun. Little by little it grew. It seemed as though we should see the full wonder of the coming eclipse, for the sun moved in a great well of blue sky. But about a quarter of an hour

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before totality, a cloud rose heavily from the horizon. It swallowed up the sun; and as the minutes passed, the sun and the shadow upon it both were hidden. Watches ticked on toward the near moment of totality. The twilight deepened swiftly. A strange ashen half-light was mingled with an unearthly gloom, relieved only by a red glow above the mountains and in the low sky. Somewhere behind the cloud which hid the sun, the final grandeur of that sublime spectacle in the skies moved to its climax. Crickets made their thin sound in the underbrush. Otherwise it was as though the whole earth held its breath and waited. The full eclipse had come.

Then there was a sense as of a shadow passing. The light began to grow, as though somewhere invisibly within the universe the flame of life had been kindled again. The eclipse was over.

It was over, and we had not seen it. We had got no glimpse of its most dramatic majesty. We had not seen the sun at the moment of that culmination which with such awesome accuracy the astronomers had foretold. We had not seen the Bailey's Beads. We had not seen the quivering radiance of the corona. And we should never have the chance to see it again. Not again within our lifetime would any of us who were on that hilltop have the likelihood of being in a part of the earth from which an eclipse will be visible. What we had not experienced that day, we should never experience. The chance had come, and gone, and vanished forever. Two words told the whole story—"no more."

That was a disappointment which lasted for a long time. It is not easy for us human beings, prone to keep on struggling to have our own way, to admit an ultimate finality; not easy to admit that something, once missed, may not by

## CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THINKING

some contrivance of ours be made to come again. In that disappointment, I began to ponder on deeper facts,—those deeper facts which now are coming to their expression in the whole mood and message of our theme today. After all, the missing of the grand experience of an eclipse, though regrettable, was not devastating. Life could go on, not profoundly the worse for that mischance. But what would it have been if, instead of losing the eclipse, we had lost the sun? Suppose out of that cloud and that shadow the sun itself had not again emerged. Suppose the great darkness had settled heavily upon the earth—as indeed in old times men in their terror thought that it would do when eclipses came—and suppose the red fires there on the horizon had died down into the ashes of an unlighted universe. Then in that case there would indeed have been a fearful note in the relentless words, “no more.”

You may, perhaps, wonder now what all this is leading to. Am I merely playing with words, or weaving the spell of an unrelated emotion? No; it is not so. The theme with which I am dealing has to do with vital matters of our own concern. It is in regard to the facts of our present world that we may hear the note of deep finality. Some of the things in which we have most confidently trusted may be in jeopardy. The time may come when aspects of our life which always have been shall be no more.

Two supreme concerns stand now in judgment.

One of these is organized religion.

The other is civilization itself.

### I

Organized religion come to an end? Is that a theme for a sermon in a Christian pulpit? Yes, it is a right theme

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for a sermon on an Advent Sunday. I do not say that it will come to an end. God forbid that it should be so. But I do say that in the form in which now we know it, it can come to an end; yes, and may do so in no distant time if we are careless and unconcerned.

For mark the facts which truthfulness must face. It is not a question only of what our inheritance is, but of what we have been doing with that inheritance. Organized Christianity has been woven into the very fabric of our American history. This country was founded by men who honored God, and who, through all their lesser and more selfish purposes, did have a great conception of a divine purpose which they were serving. The best in our tradition is due to the continuing influence of religion. The old brick tower of the church at Jamestown, and the white steeples by the village greens of New England, have been the symbols of that power of worship, planted deep in the common soil but pointing up to heaven, by which the life of this country has been made steadfast and kept true. We know well enough that men have fallen short of their ideals. Seldom in their daily walk and conversation have they fully exemplified the religion which they professed. Yet, nevertheless, throughout our American life, where it has been most sturdy and most vital, religion has been a real conviction. It has lifted up standards by which men felt themselves inescapably to be measured. It has presented loyalties to which they knew they must respond. They felt the sovereign claim of an allegiance higher than the little calculations of this earth. As long as these things are true in the Christian Church, Christianity will be invincible.

But are these things true? Let us consider.

There are thousands of men and women nominally con-

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nected with the Christian Church who actually are worshipping no God today beyond their own self-sufficiency. They have kept their names on church rolls, but they do not know the meaning of religion. If they have any membership, it is a funeral membership,—a license which they assume is theirs for good form's sake to be buried from the church when they are dead. While they are living, they seldom come to the church except for a wedding, or now and then at Easter. They feel no sense of obligation either to it or to that which it represents. They are glib with criticisms of a particular church's shortcomings and of the reasons why they do not go there any more. If occasionally they should respond to some appeal for the church's work or its charities, they do so with an air of patronage, as though any sort of response from them should be reckoned as an honor. That is not a caricature. It is a picture of some people as they exist today. They are the dead wood of Christianity. They are the barren branches into which the wholesomeness of religion has long since ceased to flow.

There is another group in the Church which is not indifferent to it, but which impedes the Church by its narrow understanding. This is the group of those who have received the Church as a social inheritance. They like it as long as their own set is found conspicuously in its pews. They are restless if the multitude crowds in—restless even if some flaming prophet arises who draws the hungry people of every kind around him, while the regular pewholders find it less easy to occupy their seats. Their instinct always is, in that drab phrase which gained currency after the war, to go "back to normalcy." They do not want old traditions disturbed nor old ways altered. To them the Church is an

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accustomed institution which ministers to their vague though pleasant taste for the aesthetic aspects of religion. They will come to church. They will give to it with reasonable loyalty. But they have no flaming consciousness of what the Church is on this earth to do. They have never caught the urgent vision of the world's awful need and the Church's responsibility toward it. In a very vivid book about Russia, written at the time of the outbreak of the revolution, an acute observer described his impressions of Russia in the closing days of the czarist regime. The court, the nobility, and all the privileged group, which swung around that inner orbit, formed, he said, a closed circle which had no awareness of what was going on outside itself. Men and women went the brilliantly lighted round of their arrogant and luxurious activities; they sat at one another's dinner-tables; they danced in their brilliantly lighted salons: but they did not know what was happening there in the great night of Russia outside their curtained windows. Of them he used this vivid and unforgettable phrase. He said they had "the indoor mind." Their thoughts were limited by the artificial realm in which they lived. They had no glimpse of the awful forces beginning to move along the roads of the nation's life beyond their doors. There are many in the Christian Church today who have "the indoor mind." They are elegant, gracious, and at least mildly religious; but their religion is a thing of pleasant ritual, used sometimes as an anodyne, without disturbing consciousness of the critical decisions which a real religion would be forcing them to make.

Furthermore, among us all there is the danger of a lukewarmness by which the forces of the Church are damped. Suppose it be true that in a certain sense we love the Church.



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Suppose it be true that we have at least an uneasy recognition that the Church must be related in some vital way to the human needs and the social readjustments of our time. Nevertheless, the spirit which we bring to these things is often tepid. We are bound to confess that many of us cannot be counted on for difficult endeavours. We cannot even be counted on for things that trench too severely upon our convenience. We will come to church in fair weather, but not in the rain. We will keep an engagement for some responsibility if we happen to remember it, and if something which we are ready to think more important does not intervene. Nor is it evident that our loyalty to the Church necessarily makes us more ready for those difficult loyalties in business affairs and in civic betterment to which we ought to be inspired. The proud advertisement of an old New England steamship line used to run this way: "In summer or winter, in storm or calm, the *Commonwealth* and the *Plymouth Rock* invariably make the passage." That cannot be said either of the worship or the work of a great many members of the Christian Church.

I know that this is not the full picture. Thanks be to God that it is not. There are those in every congregation who are the salt of the earth, lights of a city set upon a hill. They are the advance guard of all the valiant spiritual possibilities of our race. But the point is that they may be critically few, and the time may be at hand when organized religion, being measured in the balances of life and death, will be judged according to the mood of its majority. Here is the Church, existing as a tax-exempt institution in the community. It possesses still a great tradition of honor because it is believed to represent a purifying and redeeming force; but there are

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many who are beginning now to question that. They will ask whether organized religion justifies its community cost. Is there vital power within it now; or is it merely a survival from a dying yesterday? Suppose, for example, all the Episcopal churches of New York were stripped of their endowments. Suppose they were deprived of their tax-exemption. Is it certain that out of the millions of people in this city we could rally enough devotion to keep the work of our parishes carried on as it is carried now?

Meanwhile, other religions are rising in our world,—the religions of secular hopes, flaming and defiant. In Russia, Communism has become a religion. It is an impressive discovery for those who choose to look into the facts to see that in many of our colleges, both among the faculty and students, some of the most earnest men have this for their religion, if they have any at all. For this and for other secular devotions, there are people today who will go hungry, risk their safety, go to prison, fortified by their unshakable beliefs. How much is there among Christians of the spirit which will submit to discipline, endure suffering, and pledge the last full measure of devotion to a spiritual loyalty which they place above all else?

We live in a world of swift, unpitying change. No thoughtful person can contemplate the future without a serious wonder. If organized Christianity is to live, it must be because it shall deserve to live. If, on the other hand, we follow our false gods, the gods of self-assurance, of narrow complacency, and of self-indulgence, even though we cloak these in the garments of religion, they will not save us. The old words which were spoken once to Israel will be spoken again to us: "Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more."

## CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THINKING

### II

We have spoken thus far of the Church. We pass on now to consider our civilization in general.

What obvious perils does our social and economic order confront?

There is the peril of the growing displacement of the man by the machine. Lately we have heard much of a science which calls itself *Technocracy*. It is based upon the recognition that the amazing rapidity of our technical inventions is making man less and less necessary in the industrial process. Even during the period of this depression, with millions of men walking the streets looking for work, there have been inventions which will prevent many of those men from ever being absorbed into work again. A new machine for making cigarettes has increased the efficiency of the old machine five-fold. In the great flour mills one man is all that is needed to produce thirty thousand barrels of flour a day. A new electric process producing electric bulbs turns out in one hour what it would have taken nine thousand men to accomplish in that same hour a few years ago. What will happen, even if business conditions should come back from their present trough to a more normal level? Some men now out of work will, of course, be reabsorbed; but many will never be reabsorbed, because the new machines have taken the place of men.

This, of course, could conceivably be of itself not a danger but a blessing. It could be a good thing to have the load of labor lifted off human shoulders and put upon the steel shoulders of the machine. It could be a good thing if we knew how to organize our industrial society in such a way that all our population would get the benefit of the new

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productivity. But this is exactly what we have not done. We have gone on blindly worshipping the thing itself and not the thing in relation to human life. We have preached the gospel of investment; and have believed that if we kept on making more profits and putting these profits into more means of production, somehow everything would automatically be well. But what has resulted has been economic chaos. We have sought to produce, and have been able to produce, incredible wealth. But what is happening to that wealth? Out in the west, farmers have set fire to great stacks of wheat, or let them rot there on the ground where the grain was piled. In Brazil, they have used millions of bags of coffee for fuel, or dumped them into the sea. In New York State, not far from this vast needy city, fruit spoils on the trees and vegetables in the gardens. Meanwhile multitudes in the cities and towns go hungry. Shoe factories stand idle, while children stay home from school because they have no shoes. Coal miners and their families are on the borderline of starvation for lack of wages, while in the tenements people shiver for lack of coal. Is it not obvious that for some grave reason human intelligence and human character have failed sufficiently to function? We have built an order, or rather disorder, which in its social outcome is insane.

And what is the underlying reason and the crucial fault? Is it not that which too many of us, because of old shibboleths, are so slow to admit; namely, the fundamental iniquity of a social philosophy which is built upon the supposed naturalness of unlimited private profit? For the last century and a half, we of the West, in our everyday affairs, have deliberately been committed to the theory that if every man followed his own advantage with the most shrewd and persistent selfishness, somehow the result would redound to

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the good of all. Mr. J. M. Keynes, in one of his recent books, quotes this sentence from a publication entitled "Easy Lessons on Money Matters for the Use of Young People," which came forth from no less a source than The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in the year 1850: "It is curious to observe," said this treatise, "how through the wise and beneficent arrangements of Providence, men thus do the greatest service to the public when they are thinking of nothing but their own gain." Thus did an essential paganism blasphemously assume the garments of religion; and from that time to this, economic paganism and religious respectability have been walking too often hand in hand. Who are the men that in our society have won the most conspicuous rewards? Are they those who have done most for the public good? Or are they those who have manipulated for private advantage the resources which God created for all the people, and those who by some shrewd gamble have given least and gotten most? Meanwhile religion has condemned the personal sins, and has been blind to our more flagrant social wickedness. It has looked askance at a man if he called himself a church member, and, at the same time, was a drunkard or an adulterer or cruel to his children. But it has not so clearly seen the inconsistency between a man who called himself a member of the Church of Christ, and who, at the same time, was ruthless in business, merciless to his competitors, reckless of the cost in child-labor or in starvation wages in the industries for whose dividends he was gambling, a worshipper of Christ on Sunday, and an high-priest of Moloch and of Mammon when he went down to Wall Street the next day.

This unlimited pursuit of gain, as constituting a legitimate motive for individuals, has been translated also into

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our conception of the right policy for the nation. Here we all are, children of one destiny, bound together on this planet in the bonds of one indissoluble life. We are tied together by the necessities of commerce. Without indispensable raw materials which are brought to us from overseas, we here in America could not make a telephone instrument, nor fabricate a piece of finished steel, nor run our automobiles on anything except their iron rims. We are bound together in the inextricable network of world finance. The failure of a great Austrian bank and the breakdown of the German budget, were direct contributing causes of untold confusion, unemployment, and suffering in England and in America. We are bound together in health and in disease, bound together by the possibilities of life and by one common fate of death. The so-called Spanish Influenza did not stay in Spain. It ravaged Europe, crossed the seas to America, and took its toll of tens of thousands of lives. And yet in a world so inextricably united, we have gone on talking as though one nation could press its own relentless advantage regardless of the fates of others. We have set up our high tariff walls, and thought that we could be prosperous, no matter who else was poor. With stupid blindness our congress, and many of our people, have insisted upon the payment of impossible debts, now only to see the chance of reasonable settlement endangered by default on the part of a great nation, and by a growing hatred against our own nation which may cost us more, both in material and immaterial things, than all the debts are worth. In a world which desperately needs conciliation and readjustment, we have supposed that self-sufficiency and a hard aloofness would somehow get us our own particular gains. We have done too little to strengthen the forces that make for confidence

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and cooperation. In our own increases in appropriations for armaments, which have doubled since before the World War, we have magnified those forces of suspicion and fear which produce armaments everywhere. We have stood gingerly outside the threshold of the League of Nations, making speeches to it through the door, but not taking our place in its desperately needed councils. We have had too much of what Kipling in the solemn lines of his *Recessional* called the

“heathen heart that puts her trust  
In reeking tube and iron shard”;

and too little of the Christian heart that puts its trust in the new force of the brotherhood that might be builded among the peoples of this earth.

What is the result?

Does any one smoothly suppose that all our difficulties will vanish of themselves if we only give them time? We have been saying that now for these several years, and meanwhile the shadow has only deepened. We are not going to come out of this economic crisis and this tragic and terrible period of unemployment by any accident, nor by any automatic readjustments of conditions independent of ourselves. We shall never come back to the old abundance of life which we have lost unless there is a new intelligence and a new consecration both in our business leadership, in our statesmanship, and in our public desire. Our men of affairs who awhile ago were so supremely confident that we were going on from riches to greater riches have been in a panic in these recent times. They may recover from their panic; but we and they are not going forward to a better and fuller life unless first we have gone down upon our knees. We must

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face far-reaching social readjustments which will involve not only the curtailment of great fortunes and the wider distribution of the profits of industry, but must compel, if we are to survive, a moral repentance from our theory that the world of business can properly be conducted upon the motive of unlimited private profit with only remote concern for the public good. Unless we pass through this conversion from a reckless individualism to a society intelligently organized for the common welfare, we shall not emerge out of our chaos, and we shall not deserve to emerge. If we go on in private and in public matters, as individuals and as nations, defying the Spirit of Jesus which we profess to worship, then sooner or later we shall know the meaning of the awful words he spoke when he said that upon the foundation of his Spirit alone enduring life could rest: "Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

I say these things on this Advent Sunday, and in saying them I want to proclaim the vindication of the Christian pulpit. For too many years our world has gone on as though it did not need to take religion seriously. It has said "*hands off*" to religion. It has wanted the prophets of God to preach what it called the "simple gospel," by which it meant a message so remote and so insipid that it would have no disturbing consequences for immediate life. We have been told that the practical men would take care of practical matters, that the practical business executives and bankers would make and keep us wealthy, and the practical men who knew all about statesmanship would keep us proud and safe. Well, the practical men have had their day. And what have they



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produced? A world filled with confusion and fear; a world in the grip of immediate evils, and dark with the shadow of greater evils whose menace moves upon the dim horizon. Meanwhile, the pulpit of the Christian Church, with some real measure, at least, of faithfulness, has gone on proclaiming the eternal truth. I call you to witness that from this pulpit, long before this time of depression came, I have preached to you the message that no economic civilization, however gilded with apparent wealth it seemed, could long endure if it went on building upon a reckless selfishness. I call you to witness that I have preached that this nation, which thought itself so proud, so powerful, so safe, was marching toward unseen disaster if it continued in those policies of indifference and aloofness which sooner or later would provoke the hostility of the world. By what authority do you preach these things? the Christian pulpit has been asked. And the answer is: by that same authority which the prophets of God have dared to assume in every generation. By the authority of those eternal moral facts which the ignorance or the recklessness of men may contravene but cannot overthrow! By the authority of the timeless Voice which sooner or later will break through the clamor of men! By that same authority which the great Cardinal Mercier once phrased when to the German Governor-General in Belgium he said that there is a point where "it is we, the representatives of moral authority who speak as masters; we cannot and will not let the word of God be shackled."

This is a solemn message, as it ought to be. For whether we will or no, our organized religion and our civilization stand today at the bar of judgment, and judgment must begin at the house of God.

But is there nothing, then, but sombreness in our theme?

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No, not so. We speak of one side of truth today. We look forward to the hope of a greater and more redeeming truth. Beyond the doors of Advent, there shines in the sky the Christmas star. It is the hope and the promise of what we need, and, by God's grace, must gain. Out of the limitation of our ignorance and sins, we need, as men and as nations, the new birth which must come through Jesus.



GOD OF THE HILLS AND VALLEYS

*by*

THE REV. GEORGE ARTHUR BUTTRICK, D.D.

*"I AM pleading that our Christianity shall not be merely a Sabbath tassel on the common robe, but a devotion that throbs at the heart and tingles like life-blood to the finger tips."*

*"I am pleading that it shall not be circumscribed by individual witness, but be courageously applied to business, politics and statescraft."*

*"I am pleading above all that it shall not be kept only in the light, but move and reign also in that unseen potent world of desire and image and resolve. A man's real religion is what he does with his aloneness—and afterwards what his aloneness does with him."*

## GOD OF THE HILLS AND VALLEYS

by

THE REV. GEORGE ARTHUR BUTTRICK, D.D.

TEXT—I Kings xx. 28. *And a man of God came near and spake unto the King of Israel, and said: Thus saith Jehovah: Because the Syrians have said, Jehovah is a god of the hills, but he is not a god of the valleys; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.*

A SUPERSTITION interests us for these reasons: first, it is fantastic—like a man on stilts; second, it is old-fashioned and enables us to feel superior—as when we laugh at a woman wearing the styles of twenty years ago; third (though this reason we are slow to admit) there are traces of it remaining in us, and it reveals us to ourselves.

Here then is a superstition. Each tribe of old had its god: the Moabites had Chemosh, the Israelites had Jehovah, the Philistines had Baal. Victory in battle meant that the god of the conquering tribe was more powerful than his neighbor gods. Israel had conquered, which fact proved the strength of Jehovah. But the defeated Syrians had noticed that all the altars of Jehovah were built on hilltops. Perhaps Israel had seen altar-smoke always ascending, had argued therefore that God was “up”, and accordingly had built altars as near His dwelling-place as possible; or perhaps hilltops seemed sacred to them for the vague reasons for which they still seem so to us. Whatever the cause, their shrines were hilltop-shrines. So the Syrians naively concluded that God was only on the

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hills: if they attacked on the plains they could circumvent the might of Israel's Jehovah. So the answer, which also has its traces of superstition:

"Thus saith Jehovah: Because the Syrians have said, Jehovah is a god of the hills, but he is not a god of the valleys; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah."

### I

Fantastic? Yes. Primitive? Yes. With its traces in us still? I fear me, yes. Jesus met a woman who told Him: "The Jews say that God is to be worshipped at Jerusalem, and the Samaritans say that He is in this mountain"; and He, knowing full well that superstitions die hard, told her: "God is Spirit." Yet the naive faith clings that God is here—in a church, but not there—on the Atlantic City boardwalk or in Wall Street; He is now—on Sunday, but not then—on next Saturday afternoon. When we pause to think, we realize that God is a Presence—the thought of our thought, the light of our light. But we do not often pause to think. So for most of us God is only on the hilltops of sacred influence, and not on the plains of daily life. And what we do not realize, even when we pause to think, is that this assumption that God is limited to times and places (we being the modern Syrians) is as ruinous now as in olden years: we are thereby delivered into the hands of our foes.

But why should this divided loyalty be ruinous? Frankly, people do not regard it as ruinous: it is an accepted practice. Abraham Lincoln deemed it ruinous: "No nation can exist half-slave and half-free"—but he gave no reason for his conviction. Jesus deemed it ruinous: "No man can serve two masters"—and He gave a reason at least by implication;

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"for", said He, "either he will love the one and hate the other", swayed by his heart's devotion; "or he will hold to the one and despise the other", swayed by self-interest. Then He added emphatically: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Either we love God in the heart's deep loyalty, or we cling to Mammon in a mistaken self-interest.

So the piercing insight of Jesus leads to the reason why a divided life is ruinous: Our nature is a unity; any cleavage in us is our hurt. If a man in the summer is asked by his wife to beat carpets he is probably unhappy at the task. Why? Because his mind is divided: while he is beating carpets he is thinking of the thing he would rather do; and consequently the work seems much harder than it really is. But if he were on the way to the golf course he would be happy, though there he probably expends just as much energy as when beating carpets; but there his mind is undivided. A cut hand bleeds and throbs: the nature is divided. Religion on Sunday and no religion on Monday: the spirit bleeds, actually if invisibly, for then the spirit is divided! . . . whereas constitutionally it is ordained a unity.

Moreover, (and here again the insight of Jesus is our light), a divided nature is always in movement towards one of its loyalties. "Either he will love the one and hate the other" (either it is travelling Godwards), "or he will hold to the one and despise the other" (or it is travelling earthwards). And—here is the rapier thrust of the truth of Christ—if it is not consciously travelling Godwards, it is by default travelling earthwards. Or, to use the picturesque language of this text, if the hills are not subduing the valleys, the valleys are levelling the hills. For it is not in human nature to remain divided. Nitro-glycerin is an explosive because its constituents (nitric acid, sulphuric acid, and



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glycerin) naturally do not belong together: a slight blow will send each element hurtling to its proper company. Earth-worship and God-worship do not cohabit. Sometimes there is an explosion—and the whole nature is wrecked: the wreckage can be seen in our law-courts and our morgues. But, wreckage or no wreckage, our nature is moving ever one way or another: it cannot remain divided. In a deeper sense than we usually speak the words, "It is against the constitution"!

### II

Yet see how an ancient superstition persists: *there are the hilltops of the sacred and the plains of the secular*. That division is in the very words. "Secular" comes from the Latin "seculum": "what is of man, of earth, of time." The heavens are *there*, and God is there: the earth is *here*: a gulf is set.

Of course business is necessary. Worship itself is not possible in our climate without a roof—and a roof spells business. Nor could we desire to worship if we lacked food—and food again spells business. Labor and the exchange of goods are in real sense divine: for they are essential to a sovereign life. When we examine with care the parables of Jesus we see clearly, by His repeated references, that the realm of toil and trade are much in His thought. Fidelity and skill there won His instant admiration. But when the moods which govern worship, the ethic of the mount, do not consciously sway business, business unconsciously becomes earthy. If trade does not wittingly honor God it unwittingly "holds to" Mammon.

Gangsterism has its orbit round a money motive—with, perhaps, as a lesser impelling a base desire to strut and domineer. Graft in city government has its orbit round a

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money motive. Bootleggism and clip-joints have their orbit round a money motive. Brokerage houses of the wrong kind (those of the right kind are as right and necessary as any other branch of trade)—brokerage houses which on one telephone recommend the selling of a given stock and on another telephone at the same time advise its purchase—have their orbit round a money motive. And so does short selling. And so does our sex-soaked movie-traffic. And so do our advertisement-infested radio programs. Even if these pursuits were not destructive, even if they did not provoke our indignation, they would still provoke our pity. We would still be moved to say to them what Tennyson said to a young lady who had described a certain marriage as "penniless:" the poet loudly slapped down one penny on the table and as emphatically remarked: "There: I give you that. That is the God you worship."

In all these instances we see business, which in itself is of a divine purpose, assuming that God is limited to a hill. Its loyalties are divided, but they do not stay divided. Because business in these instances does not consciously love God, it unconsciously (for this money-love is not at first deliberate) drifts towards Mammon. It becomes earthy by default. The Syrian superstition takes on new life, and—tell me if I speak not truth!—the Syrian doom has come upon us: we are smitten hip and thigh. Neither God nor man can ever be divided, either in themselves or from one another. The universe is a universe: one life, one song! It bleeds if it is cut.

### III

Illustrations are not far to seek: *God, we say, is on the hilltops of individual allegiance, but He is not on the plains of national and international dealings.* We speak of the

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"individual gospel" and the "social gospel," but these two are joined together—and let "no man put asunder"! There would be no lake of social life without the inflowing of individual springs; and, conversely, no man could be a man without his neighbors. Even a hermit has learned from his comrades how to gather food and fashion clothes and make a shelter—and is therefore in no full sense a hermit.

Let it be granted that your relationship and mine with a man in Timbuktu or Tasmania is not immediately clear. Yet it is daily becoming clearer. Our newspapers retail the gossip of the world. A depression in America occasions a revolution in Siam. The radio picks up the ends of the earth and ties them in a knot at the end of every room. The Pullman Company kindly supplies a little folder to advise us that the materials of the car in which we are riding came from everywhere—from Beersheba, and the land of the Chaldees, and the unprofitable isles of the sea.

But the Christian outlook, though it is still far from regulating individual life, has much more influence there than on the farflung stage of international policy. We have little respect for a man who "has a chip on his shoulder," but what is called "national honor" is on the alert for the lightest affront. Duelling is indecent between individuals, but war between nations can somehow still be splendid. The frontier rule of "pistols for two and coffee for one" has gone from among men (it is plainly barbarous), but among nations it is still taken for granted. Forgiveness between neighbors is counted a virtue—but forgiveness among nations would be a gross sentimentalism.

In short, Christ may live here (on our separate points of rock), but He cannot live there on the widespreading plains where all the world is woven into one web of life. "There-

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fore will I deliver all this great multitude" into the doom of suicidal strife! God grant that recent American initiative—a gleam of light in very truth—may guide the nations out of their Syrian superstition into a Christlike day!

### IV.

We have yet to instance the most common and the most serious of our attempts to limit God: *He is on the conspicuous hilltops of external conduct, but not in the hidden valleys of imagination and desire.*

Mankind has always known that our consciousness is in two realms which are yet one: private thought and public deed. But psychology has recently introduced us to the idea of the subconscious. Below private thought, below the recognized motive and wish there is a dim realm of memory, habit, disposition and inheritance which, though uncharted, profoundly affects our whole experience. Thus a woman may have an unreasoning fear of death because of some childhood experience which, though it may no longer be in clear memory, is still at work in the subconscious. Perhaps the psychologists are attributing more than a proportionate influence to the subconscious, but it is proven at any rate that our invisible character has vaster bounds and more mysterious depths than we have dreamed.

The mind is like New York City at night seen from afar: there are vivid towers and pinnacles corresponding to our words and deeds; there are partly illumined walls, corresponding to our known resolves and imaginings; and below all there are houses and streets and tunnels in the darkness where ever a multitudinous life proceeds, corresponding to the subconscious. Beyond cavil our hidden life is far more vital and determinative than other generations have believed.

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But it is from these valleys that we have tried to keep God. We are all more circumspect in conduct than in desire. We would not strike with our fists someone whom we dislike, but we do strike him in our angry thoughts. Our deed may not be shameful, but the imagination is not unstained! God is God of the conspicuous hills, but He is not God of the hidden valleys.

Yet the self cannot thus be divided. Either the seemly conduct will by fervent prayer subdue the secret life, or the unseemly desire will burst into sight to disgrace the conduct. We say of a man that he "suddenly went wrong" in theft or treachery or fleshliness. No man "suddenly goes wrong." His life has been long divided—worthiness in the seen, unworthiness in the unseen—but it cannot stay divided. It is on the move towards one loyalty or the other—and the secret darkness at last breaks through to destroy the light of conduct. The doom of the Syrians is come upon him! Because he has said God is the God of the hills but he is not God of the valleys he is given over to a self-ordained destruction.

### V

I am pleading that our Christianity shall not be merely a Sabbath tassel on the common robe, but a devotion that throbs at the heart and tingles like life-blood to the finger tips.

I am pleading that it shall not be circumscribed by individual witness, but be courageously applied to business, politics and statescraft.

I am pleading, above all that it shall not be kept only in the light, but move and reign also in that unseen potent world of desire and image and resolve. A man's real religion

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is what he does with his aloneness—and afterwards what his aloneness does with him.

It is not a matter of imitating Jesus: He did not live in our age. Nor is it a matter even of asking "What would Jesus do?" It is rather a matter of keeping His picture before us always, everywhere—speaking or dreaming, voting or toiling, pleasuring or reading—and constantly praying that His Spirit may animate us through and through. The divided life bleeds—for it is cut! The united life sings like a river flowing to the sea, like an organ in some vast "Amen,"—as Jesus sang as He went to a Cross!



THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN AN INDUSTRIAL  
CRISIS

*by*

THE REV. EDMUND B. CHAFFEE, PH.D.



**W**HAT contributions can organized religion make to the period just ahead?

Dr. Chaffee believes that, "It is the task of the Church today to understand this era, to judge it, to hold before it worthwhile goals, to create the will and the spirit in which alone its problems can be solved and above all to create men and women who will be motivated by a passion to secure for all the good life they desire for themselves."

## THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN AN INDUSTRIAL CRISIS

*by*

THE REV. EDMUND B. CHAFFEE, PH.D.

ORGANIZED religion emerged from the Great War impaired in morale and prestige. It was powerless to prevent its coming and it had no clear message when it came. Faced with that world catastrophe the Church had little to offer and as a consequence its hold upon multitudes was weakened. It has survived but that failure has cost it the respect of no small number of clear thinking idealistic men and women. Today the Church faces a second great crisis. It dare not fail again for failure will probably mean that the Church will cease to have any appreciable influence in the new world into which we are coming. And this will be a tragedy both for the Church and that new day which is dawning. It is therefore of prime importance that we ask before it is too late what contributions organized religion can make to the period just ahead, a period all will agree is to be one of profound social change; one of the great turning points in human history.

The nature of the crisis through which humanity is now passing is now fairly clear. Until a few short decades ago man had to depend upon the muscle of himself and the animals he domesticated to get his work done. Very real limits were thus set to what he could accomplish. Work as hard as he could it was impossible for him to produce more

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than a very small fraction of what he wanted or needed. His laws, his customs, his morals, his institutions were all built upon what Professor Simon Patten used to call the economy of deficit. Then in the past century and a half, and particularly in our own generation, man has tapped the energies of Nature. He has stepped up the power available to him many-fold. He has made the revolutionary shift from muscular energy to the energy of high power machinery. So tremendous has been this change in the capacity for doing work that words can scarcely express it. One man can do by the touch of a hand what a thousand slaves never did. One of our great turbines can generate more energy than all the working population of ancient Egypt. This has indeed been the real revolution beside which the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution were but ripples on the tide. The economy of deficit has become the economy of surplus. It is this basic fact that is at the bottom of our present confusion in economics, politics, philosophy and religion. We are in the process of adjusting ourselves to the mighty changes which high power machinery is forcing upon us. It is because of this basic fact that we have the absurd spectacle of starvation in the midst of plenty, millions unemployed with millions needing their services, our suicide rate mounting to new heights and fear gripping the hearts of both the pan-handler and the millionaire. What can the Church say and do about all this? Before we attempt to answer this question let us deal with a prior one which is often raised.

There are some, not so many as a few years ago, but there are some, who say that the Church has no responsibility in this field. They say that religion is purely an individualistic matter, that it should not enter this economic realm. To them

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we may reply that life cannot be divided into the economic and the religious. It cannot thus be departmentalized. We function with our whole selves in each situation. Our psychology has driven that fact home to us. Moreover if our religion does not enter into our everyday business life where we spend the most of our time it will not have very much effect in the relatively few moments we devote exclusively to it. We Americans in our insistence that State and Church must be separate have far too rigidly divided life into the secular and the religious. This division has made religion unreal and it has made business pagan. And finally religion has the vision of a world completely organized around the principle of love. It can never be satisfied with less than the realized rule of God in all of human life. It prays "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

But what has the Church to offer in this world disaster? What light does it hold up in this deepening economic night? Well, it offers today what it has offered throughout its history. It offers charity. It is easy to sneer at this. No one knows better than some of us how inadequate it is and yet it is of tremendous significance in the present situation. Largely through the stimulus of Church folk the hungry have been fed and the naked have been clothed. The churches have done their part and done it well in the various Gibson committees, community chests, denominational drives and all the rest. It has been the teaching of the Church through the years that has made nearly every one in this land feel that somehow all in need must be cared for. The Church might have done more in this realm but it has given generously. Increasingly it is giving sacrificially. The Church has pretty well carried out the command of John the Baptist to the multitude who came to hear him on the banks of the

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Jordan: "Let him that hath two coats impart to him that hath none and let him that hath meat do likewise."

However no one will presume to say that this is the whole duty of the Church. It is but a palliative. If the Church can offer nothing more then indeed is its doom sealed. Increasingly in this unprecedented disaster do I think of those words of Jesus when he said to the crowds that gathered to hear him: "When you see a cloud rise in the west, you say, There is a shower coming and so it is. When you feel the south wind blow you say, There will be heat and so it is. You hypocrites, you know how to decipher the look of the earth and sky, how is it you cannot decipher the meaning of this era?" I believe therefore that there is no more important duty laid upon the Church today than that of helping men and women to understand the present situation. If from every religious leader in this country there could come the basic teaching of what this crisis really is, we could face the future with confidence. If from every pulpit in this land there could go forth a message as to the nature of the problem we would be a long way in the direction of a solution. In these days many voices are driving home the facts as to the changes which have resulted from our high power machinery. Let the churches make those facts known. Let them make it known that it is now physically possible to give every one the material basis of the good life. There would then be not only the possibility but the probability that public opinion would demand that our political and industrial leaders make the social changes necessary to use the physical equipment we now possess to give all the necessities and comforts which are rightfully theirs.

But in understanding the situation actually faced there is more to be considered than the role of high power machinery.

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There is also the hang-over we still have from chattel slavery. It was slavery that cut society in twain. It was slavery that divided mankind into classes. The ancient civilizations were built upon it. Feudalism took over the institution and re-christened the slave a serf. The industrial revolution took the masses into the factories and paid them wages but taught them to think of themselves as a lower order than those who owned the factories. To put it briefly, from chattel slavery the masses have inherited a social inferiority complex and the privileged have inherited a social superiority complex. The old, old evil of slavery still prevents us from thinking in terms of the essential oneness of mankind. The Church must help to dispel from men's minds the last vestige of the evil inheritance of slavery. It is that evil inheritance which makes us so tolerant of the idea that it is necessary and just for a few to have much and the many little.

It will be a contribution of the first magnitude if the Church can bring to its adherents an understanding of what humanity's present problem is. Possibly that problem might be stated in some such terms as these: How can we so organize our economic life as to use our high power machinery so that all the people shall have the necessities and comforts of life and at the same time have that organization emotionally satisfying to them. I add the latter part because it is easy to conceive of a regimentation of life which would provide all an abundance of things but would be hideous in its thwarting of individual expression. Now this stating of the question would not solve it but it would provide an informed opinion which would make a solution inevitable. No lasting solution will take place until there is such an opinion. It is the first responsibility of the Church then to help men and

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women understand the problem now faced by the western world.

The second contribution which religion can make through our churches consists in judging the social system of today. Like Amos of old the Church must hold up the plumb line of righteousness. The spokesman for religion must hold up the mirror to human society and show men what it really is. They must indulge in destructive criticism and not be deterred by the fact that they cannot furnish a blue print as to precisely what they would put in place of what they denounce. I rejoice that it was two clergymen, John Haynes Holmes and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who dared to speak out and flay the recent regime of the buffoon Walker. In the present situation the Church is faithless if it does not attack such evils as child labor, the breakdown of labor standards and civic corruption. Only as these evils are denounced will remedies be found and applied. I do not mean by this that the Church should be always scolding but I do mean that it must be unafraid in its championship of the rights of the poor and the oppressed.

Increasingly have I come to feel that the Church may well make another contribution in this fearful day. Our men of science tell us that they are dealing with the how of things. Ultimate meanings and purposes are not within their province. We may say to the man of science we want to fly and he will invent the aeroplane; we may say we want to go under the water and he will work out the submarine; we may say we want to be done with smallpox and he will devise the preventive vaccination. However he does not essay to tell us what we ought to want. That is not in his field. That question of what ought to be lies in the field of religion. In this fundamental difference between science and

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religion we have a clue as to the role of religion in our facing of the economic crisis. It will be a most important contribution for the Church to make clear what we really want of an economic system. The first rule for success in an undertaking is to have clearly in mind what is sought. If our social aims can be made clear then we can say to our scientists, our technicians and engineers—"These, gentlemen, are the things we want, show us how to get them."

To make a little more definite what I am saying—the Church can make articulate the demand that whatever new economic technique may be devised shall give us all the material basis for the good life. The first business of an economic system is to produce the goods we need. We can chalk that up as Aim Number One. We can also make clear the aim of security which is so deeply in the thought of all of us. From the ditch digger to the banker there is that craving for economic security, the desire to be guaranteed that if we do our part we will be taken care of in old age and in sickness. There are such physical aims as these, goals so important that they are practically self-evident. There are also imponderable goals, spiritual goals if you like, which are just as important. Individual freedom, probably equality, and certainly fellowship are goals to be held up and striven for. In this sphere the old slogan of the French Revolution was not far wrong—liberty, equality, fraternity. Religion then can make a genuine contribution if its spokesmen will help the people to keep clearly in mind what they really want, if they will define the ends to be sought. If these ends are made clear and if they are held constantly before our men of science and technicians they will show us how to get them.

A real contribution can be made by the Church in helping men to understand the issues civilization now faces; it will



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be of social value too for the Church to condemn the evils which afflict us and it will be a great gain if the Church can make clear and definite what are the worthwhile ends to be sought. There are two other contributions which must not be forgotten.

The Church can be of inestimable service in creating the proper atmosphere for the solution of the problems which now torment us. There are clashes between opposing interests. It is quite thinkable that these clashes may become actual warfare. The class war may become an open and bitter reality with all the weapons used in international war. But every human problem can be solved if there is a will to solve it. The Church is the one organization which we have which declares boldly that all are members of the common human family. If there is a genuine understanding of that fact of brotherhood a solution can be found. A heavy responsibility rests upon the Church for the creation of that spirit of good will in which alone these group antagonisms may be solved. From a slightly different angle it may be pointed out that the Church may be able to energize the will of men so that they will seek a solution for their problems until they find it. But all this may be summed up in saying that the Church has a contribution to make in this day in the creating of the atmosphere in which there will be a deep and abiding desire to find a way out consistent with justice and the golden rule.

And finally we must never forget that human society is made up of individuals. Unless those individuals are socially minded it is going to be impossible to make the collectivism toward which we are undoubtedly moving very much like the Utopia for which we strive. Some way must be found to sublimate the age-old lust for possessions and the lust for

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personal power. Religion alone can turn that trick. It can turn it by what Horace Bushnell so aptly described as the expulsive power of a new affection. Religion has always taught and it must continue to teach that it is only as a man really lives for others that he finds a satisfying life. It is only as he loses his life that he can save it. It is then the duty of the Church as it has been its duty down through the centuries to create men and women who will be governed by the desire for service. Only as such character is created is there any hope of a human society very much better than what we now have. The Church must teach that men cannot serve God and money and it must drive home also the spiritually corroding effect of the lust for power. It must make real those words of Jesus: The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. No greater contribution can be made by the Church than the developing of individual men and women "conditioned" (to use a word blessed today) to seek the well-being of others.

What contributions has religion to make through the Church in this era of social reconstruction? There are many but possibly the most important may be summed up in this brief sentence. It is the task of the Church today to understand this era, to judge it, to hold before it worthwhile goals, to create the will and the spirit in which alone its problems can be solved and above all to create men and women who will be motivated by a passion to secure for all the good life they desire for themselves.

It will be noted that in all this I have advocated no particular political philosophy or program. I have consciously

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refrained from doing so. I am not oblivious of the fact that the changes which must come will have to come through concrete programs. There may be times when it is well for the Church to endorse some specific legislation but generally speaking it will have more than enough to do if it does those things about which I have been speaking. The Church has lost a sense of its own message if it has to look around to find some program to which it may tie. Its program is nothing short of the complete regeneration of the human heart and human society and while that program may be partially expressed in some of the movements now holding the center of the stage it is by no means adequately expressed in them. The Kingdom of God implies far more than socialism or any other political or social movement.

We stand at one of the great moments in human history. The old order is crashing before our eyes. It will live on for a while but the plain fact of the matter is that our hearts are no longer in it. It has been judged by the Christian conscience and found wanting. The moving hand has written. The decision has not yet been announced but society has already made it. Individualism free and unrestrained has served its day and collectivism which alone is appropriate to the technique of high power machinery must and will come. That change carries with it the possibility of giving every man what kings and princes could not have before. It may well be that the historian of the future will count all before this century as barbarism and will write that it was not until the 20th century that man finally won his struggle for the material basis of life and became civilized. It is a glorious vision that we see. Physically speaking our economic problem is solved. All can have an abundance of the things needed for human life and comfort. To what heights may humanity not

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rise when man is freed from the haunting fear of want. What possibilities there are in human nature when man no longer has to fear that his neighbor will deprive him of livelihood! Men then can really co-operate; they can live as brothers. The vision of the prophets can come true that they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them; they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat. All these things can be done in this very generation. Whether they will be done is going to depend upon the Church and the leadership of it.



GOD'S IDEAL FOR THE CHURCH

*by*

THE REV. W. HARRY FRED A, D.D.

**W**HAT are the characteristics of God's ideal church?  
Dr. Freda says: "She shall be united by Christian love,  
inspired by a social vision, and have a deep sense of individual  
worth."

## GOD'S IDEAL FOR THE CHURCH

by

THE REV. W. HARRY FRED A, D.D.

TEXT—Ephesians v. 27. *That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

**E**VEN the most generous estimate of the church in our day will acknowledge that according to this standard, she is weighed in the balance and found wanting. But this should not discourage us. In fact it is a more hopeful position than if we possessed the sense of having arrived. An ideal is always a guiding star. It acts as a lever under human life that is sure to produce the elevation of character. To be satisfied with any effort or attainment means that eminence will never be reached. A righteous dissatisfaction is essential to future achievement. We have to look higher if we would live higher. A rainbow hanging on the distant horizon may appear to be just over yonder hilltop, but when the hilltop is reached the bow is still in the distance, beckoning us on to more distant hills.

A few years ago I was on a trip through the Canadian West. One morning, as the train was leaving Calgary, I arose at five o'clock to get a view of the Rockies at sunrise. As the train pulled away from the city, all that I seemed to see were the foothills. Then a friend said to me, "Look higher." When I had lifted my eyes to the heights, away in the distance of sixty miles, I saw the giant mountains against a background



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of blue, made glorious by the rays of the morning sun. They seemed to call us from the foothills into their majestic presence.

It may be said of the church that she has reached the foothills. While she is not without spot or blemish, for in her name wars have been waged, crimes have been committed, people have been oppressed, intolerance has been practised and bigotry has been fostered; yet on the other hand, in her name new worlds have been opened, human misery has been relieved, ideals have been promoted, and unselfishness has been exemplified. Progress has been made. But it is not enough to have arrived at the foothills. We must go on toward the ideal. We must lift our eyes to the heights.

The writer to the Church at Ephesus has reminded us that some day the church will be an institution glorious and holy. It is God's ideal for her.

And what are the characteristics of God's ideal church? As I see it they are very simple. No complicated system of theology or severe creedal test will constitute her greatness.

*God's ideal for the church is that she shall be united by Christian love.*

By this statement I do not refer to weak sentimentality. Rather am I speaking of that quality which binds God to man, and man to his fellowmen. It is the kind of love which is the keyword of life. The chest containing all the jewels of character is unlocked by it. Jesus referred to it when He said, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me." It is the type of love which looks out "where cross the crowded ways of life" and causes those who look to be moved with compassion. It stands by the side of broken health, shattered plans, seeming failures, the empty cradle, the green mound and every condition of human life, and reveals its supremacy.

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Organization, wealth, centralized authority, and creedal tests have failed to bind the church together. Love is the only power that will do it.

Out of the early life of Agassiz comes this human interest story. One day he was crossing the ice-covered lake near his home, in company with his younger brother. Their mother was watching them from the window. Suddenly she realized that the boys were approaching a gap in the ice. She became alarmed for their safety. When the rent was reached, to her surprise, the older boy spanned the opening with his body and made a human bridge across which his brother could go in safety.

Across the gap which separates the earthly church, making ineffective her progress of service in the world, must be thrown a bridge of love. It is then that she will capture the world for Christ. Not through efficiency programs, high pressure selling evangelistic campaigns, increased material equipment or larger budgets will the Kingdom of God be established upon the earth. It can only be accomplished when the church is united by love.

Emerson tells the story when he writes: "Every soul is a celestial venus to every other soul. The heart has its sabbaths and jubilees in which the world appears as a hymeneal feast and all natural sounds and the circle of the seasons are erotic odes and dances. Love is omnipresent in nature as motive and reward. Love is our highest word and the synonym of God. Every promise of the soul has innumerable fulfilments. Each of its joys ripens into a new want. Nature, uncontainable, flowing, forelooking, in the first sentiment of kindness, anticipates already a benevolence which shall lose all particular regards in its general light. The introduction to this felicity is in a private and tender relation of one to

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another, which is the enchantment of human life; which, like a certain divine rage and enthusiasm, seizes on a man at one period and works a revolution in his mind and body. Unites him to his race; pledges him to the domestic and civic relations; carries him, with new sympathy, into nature; enhances the power of the senses; opens the imagination; adds to his character heroic and sacred attributes; establishes marriage and gives permanence to human society."

"And now abideth faith, hope, and love; these three, but the greatest of these is love."

When the church is united by love she will have the second characteristic of God's ideal for her.

*She shall be inspired by a social vision.*

Jesus held steadfast to his mission in this world because he was inspired by a social vision. He was not unmindful of the tragic conditions in the world of his day. He was even conscious that the Kingdom of God would not come by observation. No matter how black the outlook, He was sure the day would come when "the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ."

Such is the vision which must inspire the church of the twentieth century.

It is not difficult to recognize that the kingdom of God upon earth is far from being realized. But this need not discourage us in our great mission. It is the world that is to be which calls us on.

War is still a threatening menace in our civilization. The League of Nations has been very disappointing. But it is not the first time that the schemes of men have ended in futility. It is for the Church of God to carry on until "nations beat their spears into plough shares and their swords into pruning hooks."

Our economic life is still very much out of adjustment.

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The steady tramp of the feet of ten million unemployed falls upon our ears with a sickening thud. Yet progress is being made. Poverty will be driven back from the front-line trenches and economic justice will one day sit upon the throne.

Government with its extravagance and dishonesty is a sorry spectacle. Nevertheless we can be assured that some day statesmen of honor and integrity will supplant the present-day politicians.

National prejudices and racial hatreds will be driven back until the brotherhood of man becomes a fact in the federation of the world.

Inspired by this social vision the church should lead on as a guiding light.

I am told that in the spire of St. Phillip's church, in the picturesque city of Charleston, there is a great light. It serves as a harbor light for the city. The channel here is an eddy channel, deep but narrow, and every vessel that enters this harbor must steer by the light in St. Phillip's spire.

Surely the church of the living God should be a light to illumine the way to a better world. From her should come the radiance that will dispel the darkness of ignorance, superstition, poverty, hatred, fear, and sin in all its phases.

United by love and inspired by a social vision God's ideal church will have a third characteristic. *She shall possess a deep sense of individual worth.*

While Jesus was laying plans for a world kingdom he was not unmindful of the challenge which came from submerged personalities about him. In the most depraved individual he saw the divine qualities worthy of redemption. In an unstable, cursing Peter he saw the rock-ribbed qualities of character. In a harlot, taken in adultery he saw no cause for

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condemnation. When loathsome lepers came out of the desert crying "unclean", he tenderly put forth his hand, touched them, saying "be thou clean." He said of himself, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." He was not looking for someone to serve him, rather did he say "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

The church can never follow her great Master if she is not passionately moved by a deep sense of individual worth. The gospel of Jesus Christ is still "the power of God unto salvation."

When the church possesses a sense of individual worth like unto her Master, she will have a passion for the redemption of human personality that will give her a new driving power in the world.

When the church can look into the soul of man and there see what Christ sees, she will push her redemptive task with a new enthusiasm and a conviction that all men are worth saving.

If the kingdom of God is to be built out of redeemed men, and we believe that it is, surely then the church should cultivate with divine enthusiasm the high sense of individual worth which was ever present in the life of her founder.

This, then, is God's ideal for the church. She shall be united by Christian love, inspired by a social vision, and have a deep sense of individual worth.

Will it ever be realized? Be patient!

"She will be glorious; neither spot nor wrinkle  
To mar the beauty of her holiness,  
And all the nations which His blood shall sprinkle  
The bride and bridegroom shall alike confess;  
Forever one the twain;  
Forevermore their reign!"

HAS GOD LOST US—OR HAVE WE LOST GOD?

*by*

THE REV. CHARLES W. GILKEY, D.D.

**I**N CONNECTION with this sermon, Dr. Gilkey wrote: "Recently—as all of us who watch the billboards will remember—one of our Chicago daily papers that specializes in telling us the news in pictures, ran a symposium on Technocracy. Shortly thereafter one of its editors called on at least two members of our Faculty with a very interesting errand. The symposium, he said, had brought in a flood of correspondence. All through that correspondence ran one fundamental and searching question. Strangely enough, it was not primarily an engineering or economic or political question at all: it was essentially a religious question. It took various forms of course in different letters; but the substance of it boiled down to this:—HAS GOD LOST US—OR HAVE WE LOST GOD? And the editors thought that question important enough, in the light of what this correspondence showed that people were thinking about, to give a full and prominent page on successive Sundays to a discussion of that question by various religious leaders in the city."

## HAS GOD LOST US—OR HAVE WE LOST GOD?

*by*

THE REV. CHARLES W. GILKEY, D.D.

OURS is not the first generation that has asked this question when it got into difficulties. A delegation of Chicago ministers called on Abraham Lincoln in the White House during the darkest days of the Civil War, and asked the president if he were sure that God was on their side. His memorable answer was that this was not the question that gave him most concern: What he was most anxious about was the question whether they were on God's side.

This same concern apparently weighed heavily on Lincoln's own mind throughout the Civil War. As early as September, 1862, he wrote down for his own reading alone a brief meditation on the will of God which was found after his death, in which this very significant sentence appears: "In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party."

Two and a half years later this insight took more definite and positive form in the second inaugural: "The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

Still more illuminating is his own informal comment in a personal letter just a month before his death:

"March 15, 1865.—Dear Mr. Weed: Everyone likes a little compliment. Thank you for yours on my little notification



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speech and on the recent inaugural address. I expect the latter to wear as well—perhaps better than—anything I have produced; but I believe it is not immediately popular. Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them. To deny it, however, in this case is to deny that there is a God governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told and, as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it.—Truly yours, A. Lincoln.”

From these four indications it seems reasonably plain that Lincoln’s answer to the question whether his generation had lost God or God had lost them might have run something like this. We have all been assuming, North and South alike, that we knew just the road that God is taking in our time, and that we ourselves have been following that same road closely. But now that we have lost Him (or He us) on that road, we must go back and re-examine that assumption with which we started.

Apparently the real trouble is that we have been following one road and God another. Our aims and purposes, of which we were so sure, have evidently cut across His as one road intersects another at an angle, so that now the further we proceed on our own way the further we get from Him and His way. The only thing for us to do is to acknowledge our mistake, retrace our steps and follow the road that He is taking. Only so can we find God again.

If we look still further back in history, beyond the experiences of our own nation and civilization, we shall find the same essential situation recurring again and again. In the days of the old Hebrew prophet, Amos, his fellow countrymen were taking it for granted that God was chiefly inter-

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ested in the ritual feasts and costly sacrifices which they were very careful to perform. Having done that, they assumed that God would reward them with the protection and prosperity in which they were chiefly interested. When this did not come off as they expected, they naturally raised the same questions that men always ask in such a time of disappointment and perplexity: Has God lost us—or have we lost God? The answer of the prophet, Amos, marking one of the main crossroads in the history of religion, came in no uncertain terms (Amos 5: 21-24). God, he said, was not half so much interested in ritual rites and ceremonies as they had supposed—and was far more concerned than they had realized about something else which they had very much neglected. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. . . . But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Hindsight is, of course, far clearer than foresight, and it is much easier for us to see where our fathers missed the road in their time than to find the road amid the confusions and perplexities of our own time. But one of the great values in the study of history and one of the constant rewards in the study of the Bible with the aids which modern scholarship has made available is the light which such study throws upon the problems of our time and the help which religion can give us in solving them.

Any such review of the history of religion, whether in the days of Lincoln or of Amos, shows only too plainly that in every generation men have found it very easy to treat God as an accessory to their own plans and desires, to call upon Him to secure or guarantee them and to cry unto Him for deliverance whenever these desires land them in difficulties. So religion becomes in their minds a kind of celestial

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or cosmic insurance, underwriting their hopes for the next world or their plans for the future, in return for the payment of the required premiums in present ceremony or conformity or conduct as they fall due. So prayer becomes a petition-in-the-slot machine, into which you put your request in proper form and get in return the piece of candy that you want. Popular religion in every generation is powerfully affected by this very human desire to use God as a means for the fulfillment of our ends, to claim His sanction and guarantee for the realization of our own unrevised plans and purposes.

Against this very human tendency to try to harness God to our chariots when they have to be pulled out of the mud in which our own poor driving has landed them, or hurried down the road of our choosing when we grow impatient at our slow progress, the greater religious seers of every generation have sounded their protest and warning in the name of a deeper religious insight. The significance of this warning is often not recognized or heeded until afterwards—and sometimes too late. Lincoln's own generation was not sure that he was orthodox enough to be classed as religious, and spent a good deal of time disputing over his denominational connections and debating whether he could be called a Christian. Our generation recognizes in his second inaugural the most deeply religious state paper of our modern times, sounding a profoundly penitential note that was sadly lacking in the utterances of all our statesmen during and since the great war; calling on the nation to revise its thinking and its purposes until they accorded more nearly with the purposes of God, as these were emerging more and more clearly amid the confusions of the time. Lincoln had learned through his own perplexity of mind and agony of soul that the dis-

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covery of the will of God calls not only for pious phrases and pleading prayers, but for intelligence, for conscience, for patience, for humility, and for unselfishness. And when the will of God is found, the following of it requires men to change their minds, their ways, their lives and their common life. It is a summons to repentance for the past, and to a new road into the future.

What Lincoln came to see through the long agonies of the Civil War, Amos had caught sight of amid the difficulties of his far earlier time. His pious contemporaries were eagerly waiting and watching for what they called "the day of the Lord," and were assuming that when it came, it would be a day of deliverance for them and discomfiture for their rivals and enemies. Amos told them (and a hard saying it was for them then, as the deepest and truest words of religion in every generation are always hard sayings) that the day of the Lord would be "darkness and not light . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it." It would be a day of judgment, not only on other nations, but on them. In the darkness it would seem as if they had lost God or He them; and in the judgment, as if His hand were turned in heaviness against them. But through their perplexity they might learn to understand Him and His ways more clearly, and through their sufferings and repentance be stirred to follow Him more closely—and not get lost again.

Every reader of the New Testament will remember that tragic hour of midnight darkness in Gethsemane when as Jesus himself knelt in an agony of prayer beneath the olive trees, a similar insight was given to him as the only answer to his prayer. Even though he had nothing to repent of, he did have something still to learn. He had been praying for deliverance from the bitter cup that was already in his hand:

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but the answer to his prayer was that God's will was different from what he had hoped or would have chosen. When that became clear to him as he prayed, the direction both of his own prayer and of his own will was changed. "Not my will, but Thine, be done." And such was his trust and confidence in God, whose will was greater and better than his own, that he went forth to meet his death saying, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

As we look back at these three high points in the history of religion, one from the ancient Hebrews, one from our own national experience, and one from the life of Jesus, we can see that each of them was a spiritual summit on which a great soul gained a new vision of God, and shared it then and thereafter with his shorter-sighted fellows who had never climbed so high. In each case this vision led men directly to a new conception of His nature and purposes, a new understanding of His will and how men may work with Him further to carry it out "on earth, as it is in heaven." As Dean Sperry has discerningly pointed out in a comment on the story of Job as it is told in the great spiritual drama that bears his name in the Old Testament, such new and larger thoughts of God are always born in pain, as honest men in their perplexity of mind or their agony of conscience and heart, outgrow the conventionalities and orthodoxies around them that can explain everything in glib formulas that are no longer adequate for the new facts or the new insights. So, through his perplexities and sufferings, and perhaps because of them, man's knowledge of God has grown and deepened in the past. By the light of that long racial experience we must look for God in the confused present, and we may hope to find Him in the unknown future.

Now no honest and intelligent man can look out over the

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confused cross currents of these hurrying post-war years without seeing that time and time again we, too, have done what our fathers did before us. We also have tried to turn our religion into a means of bolstering up or attaining our own ends; we, too, have appealed to God to give us our own desires. During the war every nation prayed for the victory of its own arms—only to discover sooner or later that its cause was linked with aims, or was using methods, that its best conscience could neither justify nor ask God to bless. After the war we Americans fell into the highly congenial business of confessing other nations' sins. We thanked God on every national occasion, and especially on Thanksgiving Day, that we were not as other nations—militarists, imperialists and now lately debt defaulters; and, like Job's smug friends and the complacent Pharisee in Jesus' parable, we regarded the prosperity which we were still enjoying while Europe was already in serious difficulties as conclusive evidence of our superior righteousness. And in the hectic years of our speculative fever and moral dizziness that sometimes became moral delirium we represented religion itself as a means toward our prosperity as the ultimate end and called on a Babsonized and Bruce Bartonized Christianity to join the chorus of eager worshippers before our national shrine of the almighty dollar.

The factors that lead men to truer and worthier thoughts of God are various—and never so much so as in our own complicated time. Our knowledge of the vastness and intricacy of the physical universe, and our sense of its mystery over against our own human littleness and mortality, has increased so fast during our lifetime that it has shattered to bits for many thoughtful people their previous pictures of God. In such an orderly and unimaginable universe, we can

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no longer believe in, much less worship, a petty tyrant or a magical wonder-worker. And meanwhile the fabric of our human history on this little planet is being woven by threads of science and commerce and communication that fly faster and faster, and farther and farther, binding the whole world together in one interwoven and therefore interdependent whole. The outgrown slogans of our nationalisms and the panaceas of our provincialities, whether economic, patriotic, racial, or religious, will neither solve problems that are international, nor suffice for the worship of the God to Whom Whittier lifted our eyes and our hearts:

"To Thee our full humanity,  
Its joys and pains, belong;  
The wrong of man to man on Thee  
Inflicts a deeper wrong."

The religious man of today sees in the creative evolution of this vast cosmic process, in the enlarging and integrating life of this long social process, the working of God. His own clarifying sense of values, revealed and confirmed in his own life-history and that of the race, points the direction of this divine working and summons him to have his full share in the working of it out. He cannot paint as definite a picture of the God he thus discovers and trusts, as his fathers did with their precise theological portraits of Deity: but he finds that their theological tubes are not only "twisted and dried" but faded into unreality when he takes them in hand, and that the portraits done with them in either past or present simply will not come alive for him. So he reminds himself of the insight of a great modern philosopher who said that "God never sat for His photograph"; and, though he cannot hang Him up in the theological gallery or paste Him in the

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album of philosophical portraits in which earlier generations specialized but which gather dust in our own time, he discovers that he can go outdoors and find God at work in the world and among his fellows—and can work with Him there as partners do who understand each other and care deeply for the same great ends, without haggling over articles of incorporation that define their respective shares of the profit and the credit.

Remembering how many people in our time have lost God because they were looking for Him in a theological portrait gallery or a philosophical album, and have not found Him there, we might almost venture a provisional answer to our original question by saying that God is still to be found at work out where vital religion at its best has always found Him—where life is lived at its best and for others' sake.

But there is one very important factor in the situation which demands further emphasis—some aspects of which at least our fathers, with all their penchant for theological portraits, understood better than we do. We live in a world which has a definite order and structure, even though we do not understand it fully yet, and that order and structure are not only physical, but in some real sense moral and spiritual. It is a world in which water finds its own level at last, and seeds spring up and bear fruit after their kind—qualitatively.

Our own generation has lost some of its sense for those differences of level, and its power to discriminate and develop those distinctions in quality. Its characteristic blind spot is indicated by the student in a great metropolitan university whose professor of political science found him taking election day off to work for the most notorious of the city's political machines. When asked how he squared this with what he had learned in the course as to the corruption which



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that machine had brought into the city's entire life, he replied: "Well, there isn't any difference between right and wrong any longer, is there? And I needed the 20 bucks. What difference does it make who gave them to me?"

We belong to a generation that thought it could inject into the arteries of our public life the poisoned information and the poisoned attitudes of wartime—and then eliminate the poison the moment peace was declared. We thought we could train a whole generation of our young men to use whatever violence was necessary to secure their immediate ends—and then have them settle down as law-abiding citizens to co-operate for the common good. We thought we could develop the machinery of production indefinitely, and let the profits thereof go to the strongest and shrewdest who were in a position to "get theirs" first; and we never realized that the machine itself could only continue to operate successfully, if its proceeds were widely distributed by social planning on a long and large scale. We thought that it would not matter much if the inevitable post-war let-down in our emotions became a let-down in our standards of honesty and responsibility as well, and if we all went out for immediate thrills and maximum profits, by whatever means secured. And now that the hold-up man, the gangster, and the racketeer have carried to their logical conclusion the motives that we thought it no longer necessary to discipline, and the methods that other men were using more respectably and more profitably; now that we can all see how serious is the sickness of modern society—perhaps we shall recover our realization that there IS a law of cause and effect in the physical order of things, and a moral structure and function in the universe—itself. Whatsoever a man—or a nation—or a generation soweth, that shall they also reap. The harvest

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will be more abundant, and its effects far more widespread, than the sowing. And we in our time have not stinted our sowing of unintelligence, of irresponsibility, of ruthless greed.

In such a time, as Amos and Abraham Lincoln would both unite to remind us, we shall not find our way out, nor shall we find God to show us the way out by confessing other people's sins! It is not enough for America to confess the sins of France and Britain and Japan, nor for farmers to confess the sins of bankers and business men, nor for business men and bankers to confess the sins of politicians and congressmen, nor for students and professors to confess the sins of everybody else. In such distressing days as these, let us hope and pray not only for new and worthier thoughts of God, but for new and worthier attitudes toward each other; a new humility, a new sympathy, a new teachableness, a new determination. "Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them," as Lincoln said. But that recognition is the beginning of spiritual wisdom, and the promise of social progress. Until we begin there, we have lost God, and He has lost us. But when we start there, it is the universal message of religion that God is not far to seek and will show us the further way of deliverance and salvation.



**MORE THAN CONQUERORS**

*by*

**THE REV. MILTON J. HOFFMAN, D.D.**

*WE must learn, says Dr. Hoffman, that "Live and let live" is not enough. Our first aim must be to "let live" and in so doing we shall learn how to live.*

## MORE THAN CONQUERORS

by

THE REV. MILTON J. HOFFMAN, D.D.

TEXT—Romans viii. 37. *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

THESE challenging words can best be brought into immediate relationship with present day living by stressing two obvious facts. First, they give us an estimate of the Apostle Paul. There was nothing half-hearted or lukewarm in this ardent follower of Jesus. His religion, and now he knew no other than the Christian religion, was for him a vital, vibrant, dynamic experience. He had come to the point where he believed that life was worth while, if all it gave a man was a chance to fight, to struggle and ultimately to win. The figures he uses to illustrate his conception of life have nothing of the restful or repose about them. He compares life to a race, with the runners well trained for the ordeal. He speaks of beating the air when boxers miss their blows. If he were living today, he would undoubtedly use the figure of the batter out on three strikes, and, therefore, having failed to add anything to the team's possible victory. His illustrations come from the Olympic games where wrestling and running were among the major competitive sports. His was the day of proud military might, and the Christian is compared to a warrior well armed for the conflict.

But more important is the fact that the background against which these words were first written is vastly different from

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that against which we read them today. The immediate context:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,”

has rather a strange sound for modern ears, for, generally speaking, religious persecution has ceased. But the basic fact that the Christian life still calls to combat is as true now as it ever was. As compared with Paul's day the complexity of modern life has greatly expanded the area of conflict. Honesty is the best policy, is an age-old aphorism. Yet it is hard to remain honest in a day when graft, cunning and deceit are so liberally rewarded. With cold, stark realism holding the center of the stage, it is no easy task to remain idealistic. A materialistic age makes it difficult to hold to spiritual values. A machine age all too often succeeds in blunting our regard for human values. Not infrequently do imposters under the guise of poverty take advantage of our generosity, and when we discover that we have been duped, we are strongly tempted to lose faith in humanity. These are but suggestions of the wider areas of conflict.

Manifestly there are three possible issues to every conflict, —defeat, a drawn battle and victory.

### DEFEAT

We had better not indulge in vague generalizations, or limit our reference to military campaigns. These words of Paul are personal words, vivid and alive. We miss their meaning entirely unless we dare to be intensely personal. The record of business failures during the last three years makes a tragic commentary on this particular aspect of life's

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struggle. No one knows how many individuals there are in our land, who, having made bad investments, now feel that life cannot possibly hold anything of worth for them, and, dispirited and hopeless, are dragging out a miserable existence with a haunting memory of defeat eating like a canker in their souls. The startling increase in the number of suicides following business reverses or ill health reveals in lines that burn the tragedy of defeat.

Even more fatal than the conflict with outward circumstance are the conflicts that are waged in the arena of the individual heart. There are those who are conscious of a spirit of selfishness that is robbing them of happiness. They try to fight this spirit, but seemingly with no results, save, perhaps, that by struggling against it, this spirit gets an increasingly firmer hold upon them. There are few of us who at some time in our lives have not had to struggle with that green-eyed monster, jealousy, and many never get out of his grip. Hate is a near ally of jealousy; envy is the twin brother of both. So it is with sin of every kind. There are few of us whose inmost soul is not the arena of a life-long conflict known only to ourselves and God. In spite of our better selves, in spite of high resolve, we find ourselves, often against our will, victims of passion or appetite, unholy greed or grasping ambition, and not infrequently do we taste the bitterness of defeat.

### DRAWN BATTLE

In football the score is a tie, and we call it a drawn battle. History records many instances of armies on either side becoming so exhausted that an armistice was arranged, and the armistice ultimately resulted in peace, but there was neither victory nor defeat. Life records many drawn battles. Simply



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holding our own is to live life on the drawn battle stage. These last years have seen many businessmen, with failures all about them, boast of the fact that they were holding their own. It is true of professional life. Many a man finds himself in December just where he was in January. The year recorded no enriching experience, no increase in knowledge, no broader sympathies, no wider outlook, no expanding horizons.

In terms of personal relationships not infrequently do we escape failure and achieve a drawn battle through no moral vigor of our own, but simply by a chance intervention, or perhaps by a kindly Providence. A young bank clerk plays the market, and does so on margin. The stock in which he is interested drops, and his broker demands more coverage or threatens to sell him out. At closing time in sheer desperation the young clerk is on the point of making away with the bank's money, and to cover up his theft by false entries. Just then a fellow employee comes into his cage, and he cannot go through with it. The evening paper brings the glad news that his stock has gone up, and he is saved. He congratulates himself on having escaped becoming a common thief. But this was at best a drawn battle. By no moral vigor of his own had he saved himself. Or perhaps, to take another illustration, we were on the point of writing a letter full of venom and gall to one we thought had injured us. Just as we were about to start, some one rings the door bell and pays us a call. We find it too late in the evening to begin the letter. In the morning we decide to put it off until evening. During the day we discover that we hated the one to whom we planned to write the venomous letter without cause. We were saved from doing it not through some

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superior moral character of our own, but by a chance intervention, and the result was just a drawn battle.

We are forced to admit that the drawn battle type of living, no matter to what sphere it relates itself, is the most unfortunate and cheerless kind of existence that one can have. If one goes down in defeat there is the possibility of having some of the spiritual compensation, even exultation, that defeat brings with it. But to be neither victor nor vanquished gives to life an existence that is somber, colorless and drab.

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We can best arrive at the apostle's deeper meaning if we emphasize the obverse,—less than conquerors. Let it be noted that in either case the victory has been won, the foe within or without has been subdued. Yet even so we can be less than or more than conquerors. History is replete with the record of the less than conqueror spirit. From ancient times it has cursed the world. Listen to the psalmist vent his wrath upon his enemy,—

"Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."

When in 1871 at the close of the Franco-Prussian War the Germans dictated hard terms of peace, they were less than

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conquerors. The treaty of Versailles, largely inspired by France, is typical of the same spirit. As a people we never indulge in panegyrics over the Mexican War of the 'fifties, for we know that then we were less than conquerors. We delight to point to our return of the Boxer Indemnity to China, for we sense here the more than conqueror spirit. One of the noblest days in our history is that April day in 1865 when early in the morning at Appomattox General Lee came to General Grant to surrender his sword. Grant had Lee in his power. He was in a position to heap every indignity upon his prostrate foe. But instead he returned the sword to Lee, bade him order his soldiers to lay down their arms, but to keep their horses for plowing, and with words, now nobly carved over his tomb, "Let us have peace," invited that noble southern leader to join him in building for a new day. Had the opposite course been taken hatred for the North would have blazed in the South for generations. By bringing to light a new day in the relation of victor to vanquished General Grant superbly demonstrated the more than conqueror spirit.

Just to cease hating an individual is to be less than a conqueror. But if we can actually rise above our hatred, supplant it with love, we become more than conquerors. To cease to be jealous of someone, and for conventionality's sake treat him decently or speak to him when we meet him, is to be less than a conqueror. But to love the individual of whom once we were envious, to work for his welfare, to promote his interests, that it is to be more than a conqueror. To cease opposing a good cause towards which we once were hostile, or even to take a neutral attitude towards it is to be less than a conqueror. But to admit that a cause is good, to champion it, to give it ardent and enthusiastic support, to be its protagonist instead of antagonist, that it is to be more

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than a conqueror. Jesus covered the whole matter in these simple but significant words, "Overcome evil with good."

Our day calls emphatically for this more than conqueror spirit. Our present economic plight as well as the critical world situation is largely due to the less than conqueror spirit. The dominance of this spirit has made it possible for 4% of the people of this land to own 80% of its wealth. The rugged individualism of our pioneer ancestors has been sadly perverted, and this perversion has become our doom. Not content with securing a competence men have sought by fair means and foul to pile up huge individual fortunes with no thought for the masses who became virtual slaves in the process. The stark paganism of much of our contemporary life is driving home the truth of the words of Jesus, "He that would save his life shall lose it." Who dare deny that in the sense in which Jesus meant it, there are thousands of lost souls today, despite the fact that they may think themselves pillars of the Church. Unless this more than conqueror spirit dominates our common life we do not deserve to be lifted out of this depression. Only as we are more than conquerors can we be trusted with prosperity.

To leave the matter here is not enough. To Paul the words, "through him that loved us," had a vital meaning. The collapse of our economic structure has shown us that a less than conqueror spirit invites its own doom. A social and economic order founded on justice, fit to survive, can be secured and maintained only as men responsible to it and for it have a larger spirit, the want of which has caused untold suffering throughout the ages. When Paul asserts that this larger spirit comes through Christ, he must mean that it comes and becomes effective when men live and act not only under the impulse and inspiration of Christ, but still more because they feel that He is with them as a silent though very

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influential partner in every undertaking. "I live," said Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

At times it seems both gratuitous and platitudinous alike to speak of the world's need of Christ. If it be a platitude, it is a platitude that stands out in full and bold relief against the background of the world's woe. Necessity has driven us to recognize its truth. Whether urged by enlightened self-interest or by a spirit that is definitely Christian, or by both, the fact remains that individuals and nations realize that a less than conqueror spirit means the ruin of the world. Our President in his noble inaugural message declared in ringing words that a new day must needs begin with a new spirit. This is being written within the hour after listening in to Premier MacDonald's address to the National Press Club in Washington. That address was charged with a fervor that may well be called religious. We have reason to believe that similar motives and similar spirit actuate the representatives of various countries now on the way to Washington. Within our own land a new spirit is rising. We are discovering that we are members one of another. We have reason to hope that bitter class wars, the strife between capital and labor, the clash of rival political factions will yield to a larger spirit of cooperation. A banking system, which, but for government intervention would now be lying in hopeless ruin, millions of unemployed, thousands of idle factories, ruinous prices for the products of the farm, all traceable to that ugly spirit of greed that has too long been abroad in the land, combine to drive home the lesson that no individuals or class of individuals can be permanently wealthy or happy save as the chance of living the good life is in the reach of all. Live and let live, we thought, was a noble sentiment. When we more fully attain the more than conqueror spirit we shall say, "let live and live."

**EMPLOYEES OF GOD**

*by*

**THE REV. DOUGLAS HORTON, D.D.**

*DR. HORTON suggests that if in the years of our prosperity we had had more leaders who were employees of God, much of our present discomfiture could have been avoided. He thinks we forgot our Forerunner, our Foreman. He says, "Our Christianity was not unpopular: it was only irrelevant." And then he calls upon all Christian men and women to become engaged in the work which no depression can convert into unemployment.*

## EMPLOYEES OF GOD

*by*

THE REV. DOUGLAS HORTON, D.D.

TEXT—Matthew xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

WORKERS wanted! Workers wanted!" cried Jesus—for this is the purport of my text in modern terms. He went up and down the land asking for men and women and children to come into an employment he could offer them. "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me!"

It has been hard, however, to hear this call for workers above the many other calls that our strident and persistent civilization has put up.

Steady and permanent positions open to men of neat appearance, over 25, in retail store operations. Salary and bonus. Apply today room 82, 1000 E. Michigan Av.

Laundresses wanted. Expert shirt finishers. Pearly White Laundry, 25 S. Magellan Av.

These were the calls, and others like them, that fell irresistibly upon our ears in the golden days of four years ago, when there were still enough jobs to go 'round. "Come unto us, you laborers", said the employers of men and women—and we went.

Practically all of us in one way or another became employees. Some were employees in the ordinary sense, working by the day, week, month, or year. Others put their money



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into the hands of some organization and so became dependent upon the decisions of the board of directors of the concern for the return on their investment. In one way or another most of us found ourselves looking for our income to some particular man or men, business or businesses, which employed either our labor or our capital for us. In the broadest sense, we were employed by others.

If the world is to be organized, no other condition of things can be wished for. We are not quite ready to return to the era of the untamed savage, each person a law and provider for himself. It would make an interesting experiment for others to watch if some one should try it in one of our cities—potatoes grown in the window box, a cow kept in the alley, clothes made out of the skins of vagrant cats lassoed under cover of darkness! But as a matter of fact not even savage man lived an independent life: the primitive family itself implied mutual employment, each member working according to his own endowments for the others severally—and this was the beginning of our prodigally intricate social organization of today.

To be in the employ of others is a wholly normal condition. We might call it the outside circle of every man's economic subsistence. It is all that some men have or hope for; and of all men's lives it is, or well may be, a part.

The usual reward for services rendered to others is material wealth—the pay envelope at the end of the week, or the quarterly dividend, which we convert into bread and butter, shoes and socks, books and music, and other physical necessities. The pay envelope and the dividend are so ill adjusted to one another as to constitute one of the most serious diseases from which our social order is suffering, but they are

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both alike in being remuneration derived from opportunities opened to us by others.

The great disadvantage of this form of employment is that when the others cease to need us and have not wherewith to pay us, idleness begins. It is "Sorry, Smith, but we've absolutely got to lay off five men this week, and as you are one of the last to come on the pay roll, you will have to be one of the five." Or it is a little item that appears in a corner of the financial page of the daily paper: "At a meeting of the directors of the B & B Oil Company this morning it was voted to omit the dividend due on the first of next month." And this is the reason for the appearance of the world today. This is the reason that proud states have had to bow and scrape like the humblest almsmen at the door of the federal government in Washington. This is the reason that, according to Dr. Royal Meeker, the average man, woman, and child in America is staggering under the burden of a debt of \$1400. The distress covers the planet. A friend tells a pathetic story of a poor, bent woman who appeared last summer at the door of his tent deep in the wilderness of northeastern Canada, hundreds of miles from any city, mumbled a mélange of native French which could not be understood, and presently produced from under her shawl a frayed and dirty piece of paper on which a friend had written for her the words, *Chômage—Charité!* It is the most dismal and most used word in all the languages of civilization today: *Chômage*. . . . *Arbeitslosigkeit*. . . . *Unemployment*. . . .!

But there have been other calls to workers besides this. In times both normal and abnormal the thought has entered the mind of persons in the employ of others: if I were my own boss and working not for this company or that but for the consuming public directly, then the word of no superior

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officer could cut me off from regular remunerative occupation. Or: if I did not calmly hand my investment over to be applied as they saw fit by some manager and his board but could utilize it in my own business in such wise that it would never pass out of my control, then I should be far less helpless than when, as now, I depend for my livelihood on others.

Working on one's own and working for others are by no means mutually exclusive: the one is an aid to the other. Even though we may be serving as clerk behind the counter of another man's shop, if we are worth our salt we make our own contacts with the customers, conceiving ourselves for the time being representatives of the business as a whole. So also if we are at work at a loom or a machine table in a factory: the very loyalties involved lift us from being merely numbered workmen handling numbered parts of a given process and endow us with pride in our work, to the end that though the work is quite anonymous some purchaser of an article we have made some day may say, "There! That is good workmanship!"—which, though we may never hear it, is yet spontaneous praise for us. It is also good advertising for our concern. Indeed, our value to our employer largely depends upon our own skill as self-reliant workers. A body of independently strong shareholders is similarly an immeasurable asset to a corporation.

The reward for work developed by one's own energies, provided it be useful to society, is, to a degree, money, but more certainly it is position. Respect and confidence are returned to a man or woman acknowledged to be a leader in the business world. Such people are invited to act on Mayor's Committees while they live, and long before they

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have ceased to live their obituaries grow quietly in the morgues of the newspapers.

These will see the sun rising over the hills of the economic east sooner than those who are mere employees, because employment comes to the latter only through them. If work done for others is the outside circle of every man's subsistence, service performed on one's own initiative may certainly be called an inner circle. It is closer to the center of one's life. It is not so soon invaded by industrial depression.

And yet, even men who have their own businesses, looking only to their public for their remuneration, have not been able to evade the grim specter. The wolf has come in at the door. He has gnawed at their heels. They have been able to put up a fair fight against unemployment, but the battle finally has gone too terribly against them. Let them offer for sale the very quintessence of what their public wants; let them display their wares in all the attractiveness that art and ingenuity can originate; if their public has no purchasing power, the goods cannot be sold; and even executives find themselves—unemployed. It is in the eyes of these men that I have seen burning the fiercer and more delirious fires, for they have the sensitivity to feel the atmosphere of social indignity which their unemployment casts about them. It gives them a feeling that society does not require them, that they belong to the unfit; and that way lies cynicism and despair.

How wonderful if some form of work could be found for which the need would never relax; for which the remuneration would remain absolutely unaffected by depressions; which would be neither an outer nor an inner circle of one's subsistence but the very center of his being!

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We are brought back to the call of Jesus. "Come unto *me*, ye workers," he still cries.

Wanted. Workers. Men, women, young men, young women, children. No previous experience needed. No capital. No questions asked as to family, race, or color. Applicants not to wait but to apply now: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!

Suppose you answer this advertisement!

"Take my yoke upon you." What can that mean? What can it mean to be "workers together with him?" The answer is given in a phrase from the Old Testament: the most notable designation of the coming Messiah to be found in Isaiah is the phrase, *the servant of the Lord*, which might be modernized as *the employee of God*. Christ was not in a business in which he was answerable to other men; he was certainly not in business for himself; he was in business for God, and to that same business he issues a call to you and me—"Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother"—my brother workman.

Just as keeping an eye on the interest of the customers makes one a better employee in an ordinary business, so dedication to the work of God makes one a better purveyor to the consuming public—and consequently a better employee in any field. One who has *only* his potential customers in mind in developing his business will doubtless pay attention to what they want, but not necessarily to what, from the largest point of view, they need. If one's end is only to meet the desire of his public sufficiently to yield him a livelihood, then as long as that public is satisfied and he is enjoying an income, there is nothing further to do. But when a man and his customers are satisfied, it is not always true that God

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is—and God does not suffer himself to remain unsatisfied, he will not be disregarded, he is never “mocked,” as the Apostle says, for long.

He was not mocked for long by our prosperity of four years ago. The consuming public was in general quite satisfied with the state of affairs at that time. As long as money was rolling through their hands, almost everybody was happy. But at the heart of the economic system of that day lay a moral distemper. When business men come to consider the public only as buyers, the groups among the public who have the greatest buying power become to them the more important, and the groups whose buying power is on the increase become correspondingly important. Big buyers make them big sellers, and they compete for the lion's share of the trade. In this situation it is inevitable that their attention should be diverted from those groups whose purchasing ability, relatively, is waning; and that those whose purchasing ability is utterly gone should become to them mere objects of charity. It follows also that the extremes should continually separate farther from each other, the big buyers and big sellers, who have mutual interests, forming more and more of a monopolistic group at one end of society and those who are in process of being shut out of buying and selling by rising costs an increasing company at the other end. In that period the cities grow, while the farm problem tends to be forgotten; and near the cities the exclusive suburbs flourish, while the cheap neighborhoods expand apace in the environs of the factories and along the transportation lines. Society is thus drawn more and more out of balance until one morning a number of men awake to the true state of affairs. They realize that the big buyers are not the whole nation and that prices predicated on the

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powers of such buyers are out of all proportion to the powers of the people as a whole. Values begin to slide. A stock market crash ensues, and another, and another. Confidence gives place to a hundred fears. All hurry to cover, the wealthy to their inventories, the petty wage earners to their little savings and poverty. So ensues presently the spectacle of bursting grain elevators—and urban famine; of mills equipped with every needed kind of machinery—and the mill hands on the street. A new balance must painfully be arrived at; and in the meantime dividends dwindle, banks fail, and the tattered beggar stands on our street corners with outstretched palm, the symbol of uncounted millions out of work. God is not mocked.

The only way to have avoided our present debacle, as every one is coming to see today, is that there should have been leaders who were not mocked, either—leaders and loyal followers who had acquired the knack of looking at life through the eye of God, as it were—employees of God, who would not have allowed their attention to be narrowed down to see the public only as buyers, but would have seen it always first as a family of human beings, and therefore seen it all. Such men would not have been blind either to the cancerous or anaemic areas forming in our body politic in the season of our prosperity. They would have had a perspective that those lacked who were animated only by considerations of trade. It is this above all which the depression should teach us: that mere economic motives will never suffice even for economic well-being: that lasting prosperity is a by-product of the self-commitment of society not to the most profitable but to the Most High. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." By working for God we should

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have done better, in the last analysis, even for our customers and ourselves.

The shame of the churches: they prospered materially during the last generation: how dare they have prospered in a world ruled by social principles diametrically unlike the brotherhood they were established to proclaim! The preaching was circumspect, the worship comfortable, within the enclaved demesne of the local parish: what difference did it make—that roaring vortex of economic paganism just outside the gates? We settled down in Nazareth and had a fairly pleasant time of it; though there was one once who worked the work of God so well in an ungodly world that that world would not permit him to live—and die—sweetly among the Galilean hills. We forgot our Forerunner, our Foreman. *Our* Christianity was not unpopular: it was only irrelevant.

But what of today? The opportunity of Christian men and women is now here—the opportunity for definite dedication to the employment offered by the Most High: the seeing *all* people as children of God: the knowing that all men are brothers: the putting of first emphasis on brotherhood: co-operation for the good of the whole: working together. And working together means just that: let this acquisitive society take notice that it does not mean working for selfish ends. The kingdom of heaven will not be delivered with the morning mail, to be sure: corporations great and small will continue blindly to compete for the great markets, taking little or no thought for the human masses which become the cannon-fodder for their economic conquests: when occasion arises when they might plan with other bodies for the public good, they will still exhume arguments from outworn business theory why they should not do so. But Christian men



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and women, it is hoped, will take an opposite stand in increasing numbers: they will see clearly that men and companies of men whose primary motive is to acquire property, that is, to make money, are not working with God and therefore are enemies of society. They themselves will exercise whatever influence and energies they have toward the cooperation of each for the good of all.

Here at last is a form of work which no depression can convert into unemployment. Depression only increases the need for it. When you live in a community in which hundreds of your neighbors are growing gaunt from want of sufficient food, your political leaders have no inkling of the way out of the increasing difficulties, and people are groping for religious assurance who four years before clutched swelling purses and smiled at the ways of piety—then, if you are a worker for God, you have a multiform task on your hands. On the one hand, no work: on the other, plenty of work for you. On the one hand, no orders: on the other, too many orders to be filled. On the one hand, no customers: on the other, so many people to serve that some, tragically, must be turned away. Was ever such a call for men and women of intelligent devotion! and was ever devotion more rewarding. Through all the darkness of these times, the Christians that I know have enjoyed a strange sense of walking in the light. More than one has said to me, in effect: "I now know there is something eternal about my job: the demand for administering the grace of God to the world never lets up."

The remuneration for this work is thus implicit in it. "Take my yoke upon you, and I will give you rest, rest for your soul." That rest which is the return for one's labor, though incomparably real, is hard to describe. It is that which every person desires beyond every other thing. It is

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stillness of spirit. It is the quiet sense of rightness before God. It is awareness of a place within the soul through which runs the tranquil river of true living: to which no outer circumstance can penetrate: which the fear of unemployment can never reach. You have a work to do for your generation assigned you by the eternal God!—a God who proclaims no moratorium for his love, no bank holidays for his good will toward men. His reserves are not exhausted. You may have your check cashed in gold at any time—and in that which is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. From ordinary banks you get something to live with: from him something to live for. And this is true yesterday, today, and forever.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!



REALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN UTOPIA

*by*

THE REV. LYNN HAROLD HOUGH, TH.D., D.D.

*CAN we combine realistic thinking with a belief in the Christian Utopia? Dr. Hough shows that the honest realist must report the good as well as the bad. He says: "If you could mobilize the good-will existing in our time, you could re-make the life of the world." "If the Figure on the Cross is God in action for the rescue of men, cynicism has received its death blow. The mighty realism of the Cross answers to the desperate realism of the contemporary mood."*

## REALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN UTOPIA

by

THE REV. LYNN HAROLD HOUGH, TH.D., D.D.

TEXT—Revelation. xxi. 1. *A new heaven and a new earth.*

REINHOLD NIEBUHR'S *Moral Man and Immoral Society* is the most realistic piece of writing which has come from the pen of a Christian minister in our time. Its corrosive honesty leaves the reader fairly breathless. We are all familiar with the kind of honesty which vicariously repents of the sins of the group to which we do not belong and then treats with romantic complacency the illusions which we most deeply cherish. Indeed we are all inclined to practice a heroic honesty about those whom we dislike and to exercise remarkable economy in the matter of telling the truth about ourselves. It has always been a characteristic of the writing of Reinhold Niebuhr that the grim truth was told about the groups with which he trained as well as about their antagonists. But nowhere has his candor been more remorseless than in this amazing volume. Even if one disagrees with many of its statements he is likely to feel a tonic clearness in the air as he shares the atmosphere of this cool and devastatingly penetrating discussion. And as he thinks the matter over, the reader is only exhibiting his own honesty if he concludes that this is but the most dramatic illustration of a realistic habit of mind which is more and more taking possession of our best young men. In the midst of all this, a very pertinent and a very important question is

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sure to make itself heard. And the question is this: Can those high hopes which are essential to the activity of the Christian religion in the world be preserved in the rarefied atmosphere of desperate candor which is becoming characteristic of the thought of the very men upon whom we place our dependence? Can we combine realistic thinking with a belief in the Christian Utopia? Can we retain our social hopes, and believe in the society of friendly men, without surrendering to that very undisciplined social romanticism whose deceptiveness we so much fear? Can we believe in a new heaven and a new earth and all the while maintain the integrity of completely honest minds?

### I

We secure a basis for a certain amount of belief in a positive answer to these questions when we remember the fashion of the rise of the great hopes which we associate with the loftiest passages of the Old Testament and the New. It is always in the ages of suffering and discouragement and despair that the mighty hopes arise. It is in the Exile, with the bitter taste of foreign food and the tragic pressure of the feet upon foreign soil, that hope takes powerful wing and becomes lyrical in its assurance. And centuries later when all the forces of a great Empire seem ready to crush the tender idealism of a faith too lovely for this hard world the passionate faith in a new heaven and a new earth is born. Whatever may be said of other optimisms, the Christian hopes are not the complacent expectations lulling luxurious people of luxurious ages into an unwise confidence in the continuance of soft and easy days. Men whose lives were strained to the breaking point by unspeakable tragedy cherished these hopes and with unconquerable gallantry

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flung them forth upon the air. Tears have entered into their pattern and blood has given them their royal red. The rack has been unable to destroy them. They have sprung vital and virile from the very cold and clammy hand of death. If they are mistaken they are not the mistakes of lotus eating dreamers whose world of lace-like fantasy takes the place of the hard realities of actual life. At the moment when these men confronted the worst, they believed in the best. At the moment when they experienced the worst, they held in steadfast assurance the faith that the world in which they believed, would be a world in which men would actually live. If courage and character can give authenticity to high hopes then these hopes have noble justification.

And these hopes were held by the very man who took the sternest and the grimmest view of the ugly actualities of the life about them. Their very words are a triumph of bitterly honest diagnosis. They had no illusions. They refused all evasions. They told the whole horrible truth in words which sting like lashes. And in this very mood of almost incredible intellectual and moral and spiritual honesty they looked up to see before their eyes the hope of a new heaven and a new earth. The very men who might have murdered hope, created hope. The very men who might have witnessed the death of moral expectation, gave the world the lyrical promises which in ages since have kept alive the very soul of mankind.

### II

William Watson once wrote of "souls whose wellsprings fail or flow defiled." And he set forth the fact that to these men of depleted or poisoned vitality the sights they see become trite or stale or lose their charm. We cannot quite ignore the tendency of the eye "to see the thing as the eye



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likes the look." The muck-raker may become so fascinated by muck that he refuses to look up at the sun. Maarten Maartens once told a tale of a young man invited by a friend to take a walk on the sand dunes. When the walk was over the young man complained that he had seen only sand dunes. "After all," replied the friend, "there was the blue sky overhead." Sometimes when we think we are being realistic we are only reflecting the quality of a very dull and tired state of mind. We are expressing the world-view of a weary eye. And sometimes our sense of our own failure makes us enjoy analyzing the failures of others. The cynic is a man who refuses to believe in anyone else because he knows that he cannot honestly believe in himself. His eye corrupts what he sees. His mind has corrupted his eye. And his own will has corrupted his mind. As Carlyle said, "The same universe is reflected upon the optics of Newton and Newton's dog Diamond." But after all it was a different universe which the mind back of Newton's eye gave to Newton. As a romanticist must guard against the corrupting tendency of his romanticism, so a realist must guard against the corrupting tendency of his realism. The romanticist is likely to see a new heaven and a new earth when these consummations are only the creation of his own inflamed fancy. A realist is likely to refuse to see a new heaven and a new earth when these are actually within reach. On either side the habits of our minds may take the place of fresh and clear appraisal. The professional pessimist is just as far from the reality of things as the professional optimist. It was the glory of the Old Testament prophet that neither his gloom nor his hope corrupted his intellectual and his moral honesty. So he sings in the midst of dark hours and he turns from his songs to a renewed condemnation of contemporary evils. And so the New Testa-

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ment hopes prove that a mood of gloom is never allowed to become a philosophy of life, and the ugliest of actualities are never allowed to cloud the eye to the beauty which lies beyond.

### III

Two friends were once strolling along a country road. At precisely the same moment the two burst forth in exclamation. One had suddenly spied the loveliness of a wayside flower. The other had seen the quick motion of a poisonous snake. When the snake had been killed by one and the flower was in the buttonhole of the other they walked along in silence for a little while. Then the man who possessed the flower said with a quiet chuckle, "I wonder which one of us is a realist." His friend was silent for a moment. Then he replied, "I suppose I must admit that the flower is as real as the snake."

The truth of course is that the realist has a moral responsibility in respect of detecting and setting forth the good in every situation and its moral and spiritual promise as well as its evil. Realism does not consist simply in telling unpleasant truths. After the antiseptic honesty which comes from facing the evil there is the equally antiseptic honesty which comes from facing the good. There is a type of contemporary fiction which attempts to secure realism by interpreting all the higher experiences in the terms of the physical. Now a little more realistic thinking would lead to the insight that while you can interpret the lower in the terms of the higher you cannot successfully interpret the higher in the terms of the lower. You can fancy an erudite pig going through the masterpieces of the world's literature and paying attention only to those things which have some kinship with

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the life of the sty. But the result would not be realism. It would only be a Pig's-eye view of the universe.

Now the moment we recognize the responsibility of the realist to do justice to every element of good, and every element of moral and social promise in the life of man, there is a subtle change in perspective. At once there emerges the fact that the honest critic himself is a product of the whole bundle of life which he subjects to such corrosive analysis. There is something in man which refuses to regard evil as if it is inevitable. There is something which views with scorn "the miserable aims which end with self." Whence comes this capacity for self criticism in the individual and in society? And whence comes the social capacity for response to the voice of the critic and the reformer and the prophet? Whence comes the whole history of the success of moral and political and social reform? The realist may study Talleyrand with disaste and disgust. He surely must study Talleyrand's contemporary Wilberforce with admiration and even with reverence. And the long battle of Wilberforce against the slave trade was crowned with amazing success. There is an actual story of moral leadership and of social response in the life of the world which gives a startling dignity to the life of mankind. And the realist is under bonds to take due and honest account of it. The moral and social history of man does make it clear that once and again a good which seemed beyond reach was captured and made secure. It cannot be made the basis for a faith that progress is inevitable. It does give security for the belief that mighty moral and spiritual resources are within the reach of man and that when they are received and utilized the results are such as reach astonishing dimensions.

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### IV

For all this the life of the world does present a picture of tragedy before which one's mind revolts. It may be all very well to think of the brighter side of the picture if one is sitting by a cheerful fire in a pleasant home. But if one is feeling the pangs of hunger or shivering with inadequate clothing it may not be so easy to be philosophical. If one is personally suffering from that social injustice which poisons our life, gentle words or friendly optimism unaccompanied by stern battling deeds in the name of a better social order, may seem but the narcotic which those who profit by an unjust system would apply to those who suffer from its unrighteousness. The comfortable philosophy of the well-fed has a way of sounding dishonest to those whose stomachs are empty. We all are a part of one great bundle of life and we cannot scramble for the few oases, and then speak politely to those who are out on the burning sands of the desert unless we expect curses both loud and deep to be hurled back at us.

But here again we are not without words of honest comfort. In our own time first a few, then a larger group, and at last a multitude which it would be difficult to number, has actually bent under the burden of the underprivileged, attempting to make that lot more just and happy. The realist must frankly tell the whole story of the social ministry inspired, directly and indirectly by the mighty sanctions and imperatives of religion, if he is to deal honestly with all the facts. And here he will find an unhesitating idealism, a practice of unselfish friendliness, a joyous and eager self-giving, which constitute a part of the noblest fabric woven by the men and women of our time. Every city has its tale of those

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who have made the unjust burdens which fell upon other shoulders their own. From gardens of Gethsemane these mighty believers have shouted their great hopes. From Golgothas of the spirit they have defied the selfishness of the world. The capital of moral and social and spiritual idealism, which an investigation of this aspect of social activity reveals, promises something very noble for the future life of mankind. If you could mobilize the good-will existing in our time, you could re-make the life of the world.

### V

But after all, the great security for the social hopes of mankind lies in faith in a God in whose life and character these hopes find their ultimate basis and their final security. And here it is not the realists but the "light, half-believers of their casual creeds" who menace our shining expectations. It is the dilettante rather than the man of grim and heart-broken earnestness who saps our reserves of courage. Gammaliel Bradford once wrote a poem expressing the really dangerous mood.

"The followers of William James  
Still let the Lord exist,  
And call him by imposing names,  
A venerable list.

But nerve and muscle only count,  
Gray matter of the brain,  
And an astonishing amount  
Of inconvenient pain.

I sometimes wish that God were back  
In this dark world and wide,

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For though some virtues he might lack,  
He had his pleasant side." \*

This half-sneering and irresponsible mood robs a man of the very power to find the sources of indubitable belief. The great truths are not revealed to careless human butterflies. But the realists are already on the way to a great belief. They have refused to play with life. They have refused to tell pleasant lies about life. And like Job they will have their great moment when the vision of the living God restores their highest hopes and gives the lie to their darkest fears.

The authenticity of our social hopes depends at last upon just one thing. And that one thing is the nature of the ultimate universe. Theology is the only thing which really matters when we talk of preserving our social expectations. If the ultimate fact of the universe is found in a Conscious Person, who is Righteousness and Love alive, then we can really believe in a new heaven and a new earth. So we may well cry with one of Browning's character's: "I will get to God." How futile are our radiant hopes, and how impotent our social optimisms, unless they come from something which has been eternal in the life of God. But the very mood of terrific honesty which characterizes the best young men among us has in it a promise of a new discovery of God. We cannot put our social hopes on one side, and our experience of God on the other, as if somehow the two were opposed. God is the source of our social hopes. He is the justification of our social expectations. He is the security of our belief in something better than an age of gold. If the Figure on the Cross is God in action for the rescue of men, cynicism has received its death blow, and hope has a right

\* *Life and I*—page 282. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York.

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to rise eternal in the human breast. The mighty realism of the Cross answers to the desperate realism of the contemporary mood. But it is only as you see God upon the Cross that you find the social hopes of men made secure. It is only by means of a living theology that we can keep the Christian Utopia in an age of grimly realistic thought. It is the lonely, tragic, glorious Figure upon the Cross who gives authenticity to our belief in a new heaven and a new earth.

SHOULD WAR BE ENDED?

*by*

THE RT. REV. PAUL JONES



**B**ISHOP JONES points out that we must find the emotional equivalent of war. He says: "The project of reclaiming and rebuilding the world is not only the prerequisite to a warless world; it tends also to become the emotional equivalent of war,—a task in which people losing themselves can find life anew. Is this too searching a program to contemplate? Is it not asking too much of ordinary people to expect that they might seek first the Kingdom of Heaven? The words betray us. We have not been willing to pay the price. In the name of war, an enterprise which postpones the coming of the Kingdom, we have made great demands on people and they have risen to them. When we make equivalent demands upon them in the name of the Kingdom and begin seriously to reconstruct our society, then only can we honestly say that war should go."

## SHOULD WAR BE ENDED?

*by*

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THE question is not as foolish as it sounds. It is true that it comes subsequent to the tremendous efforts that went into what was called a "war to end war," and to the exertions of more recent years which have been poured into all kinds of conferences, congresses and conventions arranged to limit or reduce the weapons of war, or to set up agreements and pacts which would make war impossible or at least unlikely. In the face of all these activities, which have taken it for granted that war ought to go, it may appear presumptuous to raise such a question; but the unpleasant fact stares us in the face, that in spite of all these efforts, war is just as close to the foreground of the picture as ever. It is possible that we have been misguided in our aim.

Nor is the question, *can* war be ended? There are many, no doubt, who would say that our failure thus far settles the question; it cannot be abolished. But repeated failures prove no more than that we have not yet succeeded. Few people today would class war with what is known in insurance parlance as an act of God. It is distinctly a man-made affair with its roots deeply embedded in the social order which mankind has slowly worked out. We cannot dodge the responsibility for it; and, by the same token, what we have made we can unmake anytime that we are sufficiently desirous. The possibility of achieving a warless world is still perfectly open.

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And I am not raising the question, *will* war be ended? That is a proper subject for speculation upon which much has been written and more will be. But I have no desire to assume the role of a prophet to the extent of indulging in predictions in regard to it. We can profitably leave that question to such an outcome as the future will bring, if our present action is intelligently directed.

Should war be ended, then? In our emotional reaction against the brutality, horror, waste and stupidity of war, it is possible that we may not have sufficiently considered the possible values that may still inhere in it, in spite of its terrible evil. Obviously, not enough people have become convinced of the case against it, or at least the right ones have not been won over. If they had, more progress would have been made.

Here are some of the things that people still say about war: that it is a necessary means of preserving national safety and security, that it may be needed in order to preserve the race, that it protects us against the danger of overpopulation, that it develops the sterner virtues that civilization needs, that it provides an emotional safety valve from the dull routine of ordinary life, that it fits human nature, and that it gives the only way of escape to submerged individuals and minority groups.

People who hold these views are not necessarily enthusiastic for war, usually not; but they are not convinced that it should be done away with. Their attitude is like that toward castor oil. Few people are enthusiastic about it, and the youth vote would be one hundred per cent against it; but in certain emergencies and as a last resort they would say that it has its value,—it is a necessary evil. Such is their feeling about war.

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It is not my intention to discuss all of these varied ideas, for most of them have been ably and adequately dealt with many times over. There is one of them, however, that is of peculiar significance to people who hold a spiritual view of life, one to which we have given, I believe, too little attention; and it is one which is usually in the background of the thinking of those who use any or all of these various justifications of war. It is the fact, for fact it is, that war gives a much needed emotional release to people caught in the meshes of a humdrum, colorless existence. As long as that holds true, the case against war is not clear.

To millions of people, the late war did just that. It delivered them from the routine and drudgery of a life in factories, stores, farms and offices that at best was meaningless and at its worst was hardly bearable. People who had got in a rut, who were emotionally starved, whose only life was the vicarious one of novels or movies, were given a chance to emerge, to take a real part in something that was of tremendous significance. From being mere cogs in a machine, they could become heroes and lose themselves in a cause that was bigger and more compelling than anything they had experienced before.

And as for individuals, it was also true for submerged national groups. In peace there was no outlook for them; but in the seething tides of war, in spite of all the suffering and hardship, new national aspirations were born and nourished.

To the extent that we want the life more abundant for every son of man, it is not enough to say to people in this situation, "Listen to our gospel instead." To too many of them, we have made only promises, while war has actually enabled them to find themselves. That is why the question

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is still pertinent, *should* war be ended? Until we can meet that deep human need for life that has real significance, it may be a real question whether war should be eliminated.

It will not do, however, to leave the question at this point; for more things need to be said about the kind of release that men and women found in war activities. There has been a growing realization that the new dignity and sense of validity which people experienced in war were to a certain extent, at least, spurious. How many of those who found themselves in those activities escaped the disillusionment that came later? And this disillusionment has lasted. For everyone who got a new grip on life, another could be set up who lost his ideals and was thrown into a state of cynicism. Against the new national freedoms that have given a dozen peoples a chance for independent life, must be measured the equal number of minority problems which the settlement provided, sore spots that are going to fester indefinitely. The world today is still sick from the debauchery of those years, and the fair promise that seemed so real to countless individuals is now almost forgotten in the relapse that occurred.

The picture is just a re-drawing of the case of the man who seeks release from dull drudgery through drink or dope. It does produce a sense of vitality and well-being, it does help him to expand and feel that he is somebody, but it is only a false release; for not only must he sometime awake from his dream and go back to the drab reality, he usually goes back weakened by the experience.

There, too, war follows the same line. Even if it really served the emotional needs of men and gave them something which the ordinary course of civilization does not supply, the price to be paid is too high. Modern society cannot

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stand such a dislocation as war brings without a very real danger of complete catastrophe. To bring the world down in ruins in order that a few millions may for a time get a sense of achievement is surely the last word in stupidity. It is to set the stage for a dramatization on a world-wide scale of Charles Lamb's "Dissertation on Roast Pig."

Even the process of finding that release which war brings is not unlike the experience of the drinker who discovers that he has used poisoned liquor. The old glamour has gone from war, and the so-called military virtues no longer play their parts. The dashing splendor, gallantry, intrepidity and honor that used to be associated with it have now given place to the filth and squalor of long drawn out contests between droves of burrowing human rats fed with lying propaganda.

It should be noted that William James wrote his essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War" before this last great exhibition of what war is. Had he lived through the war years, it is quite likely that he never would have suggested the need of a moral equivalent of war, but he might have stressed the need for an emotional equivalent. He suggested drafting young men into squads to take part, under competent leadership, and for their country, in reclamation projects for the conquest of nature. Discipline for a useful purpose he would have set over against discipline for a socially wasteful one. But discipline is no longer the conspicuous element in war. To one who has experienced the hysteria of war time and has watched what Caroline Playne has called the "Neuroses of the Nations," it is clear that, whether for good or ill, war must be considered from the emotional point of view. And to the extent that there is a recurring need for that emotional release which, spurious

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or not, war brings, today we need an emotional equivalent for war.

To this point, then, have we come. Society being what it is, there is so much dullness, so much drudgery, so many frustrations and blind alleys in life, so many things that keep people from finding a real place to express themselves, so little opportunity for many people to do anything of real significance, that war still offers a way of escape. It is a spurious way and one fraught with too much danger to society; but as long as our social order is like that, war is likely to be with us.

In that situation lies not only our despair but also our hope. Does it not suggest the necessity of undertaking with far more earnestness and determination than we ever have before the task of rebuilding society, so that it may give every human being an opportunity for the full development of his personality in co-operation with his fellows? To return to the figure used earlier. If we want to save a man who drinks to escape the ills and frustrations of life, the method is not to abolish liquor, but to open the way for him really to find a significant outlet for his capacities. That is obviously the road to take with society if we are in earnest in wanting to end war.

The great Christian adventure is that of rebuilding life and lives. Too long have we put the emphasis on the latter word and have ignored the teaching of modern sociology, let alone Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom, that society is one, and that it largely makes the individual. From a new angle the burden is laid upon us of so transforming the social order that it shall no longer thwart men's proper aspirations for full life but shall evoke their creative activity. To make work and life in their ordinary aspects interesting and mean-

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ingful things will remove the last claim that war can make to continued toleration.

Let no one suppose, however, that it is any light and easy task to put such a reorganization into effect. Society very stubbornly sticks to its old ways. Those who are beneficiaries of the present order are not prepared lightly to give up their privileges. There is, too, real difference of opinion as how such a reorganization should be worked out. Under those circumstances, it is going to take hard, uphill work of a sacrificial character, work that is going to be misjudged, attacked, ridiculed and opposed in every way. It will involve all the excitement and chances of war, and even its risks to life may be as great. This has been true whenever Christians have challenged some phase of society in the past, and there is no reason to doubt that it will be again.

In a word, not only is the call to remake the world so that it may be a real Kingdom of Heaven as challenging as any that has been issued in support of any war, but the enterprise itself demands as much of the individual in loyalty, devotion and service as any nation ever claimed. But that is an understatement. The challenge is a larger one and the demand on the devotion of the individual is more complete, for it asks not just much, but all. The project of reclaiming and rebuilding the world is not only the prerequisite to a warless world; it tends also to become the emotional equivalent of war,—a task in which people losing themselves can find life anew.

Is this too searching a program to contemplate? Is it not asking too much of ordinary people to expect that they might seek first the Kingdom of Heaven? The words betray us. We have not been willing to pay the price. In the name of war, an enterprise which postpones the coming of the Kingdom,



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we have made great demands on people and they have risen to them. When we make equivalent demands upon them in the name of the Kingdom and begin seriously to reconstruct our society, then only can we honestly say that war should go. Men and women want life and they need the challenge of a demanding loyalty. In the absence of real life and lacking such a challenge, they will respond to the spurious invitation of war, and one can hardly blame them, disastrous as the consequences of such a response may be for all of us. If we wish to respond to the question, "Should war be ended?" with a ringing affirmative, there is no other alternative but to make our call for larger service in transforming human society the one great all-demanding summons of the day.

ROAD-MAKERS FOR THE NEW DAY

*by*

THE REV. RUFUS M. JONES, LL.D., D.D.

**T**HERE can be no 'new world'," says Dr. Jones, "until new habits of life and thought are formed in the men in whose hands the destinies of society rest." He makes a strong plea for a religious concept that shall be "a vital and creative way of life", and defends an affirmative type of mysticism.

## ROAD-MAKERS FOR THE NEW DAY\*

by

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TEXT—Romans vi. 4. *Walk in the newness of life.*

H. G. WELLS has a vivid story of a man left for the night in a room reputed to be haunted. The story describes the effect on the man's mind of having a row of candles go out in succession one by one, so that he passed from light to dimness and finally into the dreaded dark. That state of mind has been slowly coming on in our world today. The row of candles has been going out. Hope has been slowly waning away and easy panaceas are at a discount.

The way out of depression cannot be by some short cut, nor will thoughtful persons be satisfied by a mere return of wages and prosperity. Nothing short of a profound transformation of the present social and economic order will meet the situation. But social and economic transformations cannot be accomplished by the repetition of some magic slogan or by the waving of an abstract theory.

There can be no "new world" until new habits of life and thought are formed in the men in whose hands the destinies of society rest. The persons who have been making such a mess of the ideals of democracy would go on making a mess of the ideals of any golden age unless their hearts are changed and the foundations of their character altered. That

\* Parts of this sermon appeared originally in *The Christian Century*, and are here re-printed by special permission.

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is a slow and difficult process, not the stroke of a sudden miracle. It calls for patience and it will involve postponement. Most of all, it calls for a deepened spiritual life and for a religion that is brought out of the dull and formal stage of dogmatism and ecclesiasticism into a vital and creative *way of life*—a religion that makes a new kind of person.

Religion of vital intercourse with God, first-hand experience of His actual presence does have that effect. It releases an unwonted spiritual energy and floods the life with joy and power. One stops arguing and debating and finds himself in the currents of Life itself. This type of religion is usually called mysticism. It is an overmastering conviction that actual contact is attained with a life-giving, joy-bringing presence, as real as the air we breathe. The supreme evidence which such an experience gives to the mystic is the moral and spiritual transformation which comes with his experience, and the passion which is awakened in him to become a transmitter of life to those who are devoid of it.

Besides those who are conscious of this vitalizing presence there are many more persons who *practice the presence of God* without being positively aware of His objective presence. They walk their daily round with radiant faces and wist not that their faces shine. They feel a summons and a call to high adventure without knowing whence the breath of the Spirit blew upon them.

### DOES IT MAKE ONE OVER-OPTIMISTIC?

The criticism is often made that some of us who put a strong emphasis on the mystical side of religion are over-optimistic and take a too rosy and comfortable view of the real world with its black blotches and its unrelieved tragic

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aspects. It is said that we withdraw from the challenges of the world as it is, from the appalling wrongs of the social order and from the plain irrationalities and disteleologies that are inherent in the very structure of the universe, and that we get a holiday of relief for our souls in what we believe to be the calm and peace of a moment's discovery of God. It is assumed that we who talk of mystical experiences are a new type of lotus eaters who have become drugged into a lull of peace and a calm of joy by our faith that we have found a private stock of spiritual resources.

There have certainly been mystics of that type, who

Leaving human wrongs to right themselves  
Cared but to pass into the silent life.

It is a subtle temptation for those who are spiritually minded to seek for peace and calm beyond the din and noise of this poor world, to build tabernacles on mounts of vision and to stay withdrawn from the cry of the human. There is, too, an age-old religious tradition, older than St. Augustine, that the individual soul and God—God and the soul—are the only realities that matter and that when they are reconciled in peace and united in love, religion has then reached its goal and terminus.

### THE DANGER OF QUIESCENCE

The very strong emphasis which the folio-edition mystics of history have put upon the negation of the finite, upon withdrawal (*Abscheidenheit*) from the temporal, upon concentration on the abstract and quality-less Infinite, it must be admitted gives occasion for pause, while their tendency to slide the whole way into passivity and quietism ought to put a modern Christian on his guard. If this so-called in-

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tensest type of religion—religion raised to a glowing caloric state—ends in a narcotic quiescence, it may well be that a less focal and concentrated type of religion will be more effective, at least here on the checkerboard earth where we are called upon to live.

In spite of all these pointers and danger signals, the fact however remains that the mystic is more likely to be a hundred horsepower person because of the intensified faith which comes with his experience of God than he would have been without it. Some persons are natively and predominantly introverts. They "build all inward," they shun "the entanglement of things," they are shy in the society of others, they prefer to dwell apart. Whether they have mystical experiences or not they would incline to let the old world go its own way without having it drag them into its swirls and maelstroms. There are other persons who are keyed for action, whose sympathies are intense, whose hearts are large and who are the prophetic bearers of ideal hopes and conditions. When a mystical experience of God adds its kindling power to one of these extrovert persons he becomes a far more dynamic and effective organ of love and service than he would have been if his religion had not received this intensified caloric.

### MYSTICS AND AUGEAN STABLES

Some mystics in all ages and in all lands have been prophets of ideal conditions, have led reforms, have created new faiths, have cleaned out the Augean stables of the world, or have bound up the wounds of suffering humanity. And again, there have been mystics who have been content, like Simeon Stylites—I cannot call him saint—to think only of the cultivation and perfection of their own precious souls.

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It is not his mysticism that makes a given mystic self-centered and in-drawn. It is his theory of life, often his inherited metaphysical theory, or his fundamental temperament and disposition which his mystical experience has failed to transform. Mystics are still men, with a lot of the human left. If you prick them they bleed; if you tickle them they laugh like other humans.

Speaking generally, however, the lives of mystics are intensified, kindled and dynamized by their experiences and their outstanding spiritual characteristics are usually heightened. The passion for abstract unity and for an eternal that is entirely beyond and above the temporal has been due in the past far more to the prevailing neoplatonist metaphysics than to any essential feature of mystical experience itself. Protestant mysticism almost never takes that bent. States of ecstasy, a striving for an experience that terminates in an empty blank, do not usually characterize modern mystics. They are of the affirmation rather than of the negation type. They feel invaded, fused, kindled, awakened, integrated, flooded and overbrimmed rather than caught up and rapt away from time to eternity, from our way of life as men to a mysterious way that does not conform to the habits of dwellers in the realm of time and space.

### INTENSIFIED PERSONALITY

This is what some authorities call the milder type, or the milder degree, of mystical experience, but in any case, however named, it has been the prevailing form since the period of the humanistic renaissance in the western world. In many instances the inflooding of life and energy is demonstrated by the heightened quality and power of personality rather than by some moment of exalted consciousness of divine



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Presence. The person's whole being seems somehow to have found new levels and to have attained an extraordinary power to stand the universe, without being able to date the moment when the new height was reached.

The point of importance is this, that there is a fairly common form of mystical life in which intensified faith and fortification for action are the most striking characteristics. Whatever one may say of those who have walked the *via negativa* (and many of *them* were surely creative saints) those who belong to this other type, like St. Paul's panoplied knight, can usually be found girt with the whole armor of God, including the sword of the Spirit, fighting manfully in the moral contests of the world. Most mystics whom I have known would agree with Josiah Royce that "the only way whereby God can be in his heaven, or that it can be all right with the world is the way that essentially includes the doing of strenuous deeds by righteous men." Professor Charles Bennett was right, I think, when he said that the mystic, when he squarely confronts evil, "knows that *it* has not the final word." Mysticism does bring an optimistic temper in that it gives the fighter of evil assurance that God is in the battle with him and "is equal to the emergency," though I know of no mystic who would expect God to win the moral battles which he deserts for the sake of securing emotional thrills and ecstasies.

### DISSATISFACTION WITH SLOGANS

I think one reason why the mystic sometimes seems to eager reformers not to feel profoundly enough the depth of the tragedies of life, and not to cooperate as strenuously as he ought to do in the work of social reform, often is that he

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does not easily find himself satisfied with the "slogans" that are used in great causes or with the panaceas that are offered as cures for social ills. In his sensitive soul he has grown wary of religious dogmas and he does not feel at home with the hardly less sweeping dogmatisms of those who expect him to fight under their banners. There are many reasons why men of a certain type and quality do not feel at ease in great organized movements. There is a kind of tyranny in any great movement that drags a person along faster and farther than he is ready to go or than his own insight enables him to go. Mass action and committee regimentation grow oppressive to persons who would prefer to trust to "those tiny invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual creeping in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets or like the capillary oozing of water." (William James.) Such persons prefer methods of contagion and inspiration rather than methods of organization and committee work.

It has been my lot to work on about as many committees as has any one of my generation, and I have generally been found pushing at organized movements—some of which moved and some of which seemed to be sloughed. But I always prefer the educational method, the method of inspiration, the kindling and quickening of the individual mind, where such methods can be employed. This preference, however, this emphasis on soul-force, and silent contagious influences, in no way implies a lack of passion for unknown truth and unachieved goodness.

It does not mean that those of us who feel that we have made a discovery of God have had the nerve of action cut, or that we expect God to achieve the moral victories of the

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world while we are away on mystical holidays, nor does it mean, if I may speak for myself, that the discovery of God has eliminated from the soul the tragic sense of the wrongs and injustices of the social order. Every true glimpse of God only makes moral wrong just so much the more unbearable.

**THE IDEA OF GOD AND TODAY'S QUESTIONS**

*by*

**BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL**

*BISHOP McCONNELL discusses here some current ideas of God. He says: "I do not think we are losing our grip on the proper approach to God, in whatever terms we may think of Him—that approach being free surrender to the highest moral ideal we can reach, an ideal which for the Christian is made real in Christ. The Gospel word still holds good, that it is by doing of the will that we attain to knowledge of the truth."*

## THE IDEA OF GOD AND TODAY'S QUESTIONS

*by*

BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

IT IS encouraging to see the present-day interest in the idea of God. Anything is better than to have no lively concern for the conception which stands at the center of Christianity. As long as there is discussion at all we may be sure that the thought of God is at least alive. Sometimes the enemies of Christianity bear witness to the vitality of the system they hate by the intensity of their attack. The instinct of an enemy is at times a revelation of the might of that which he opposes.

The outcome of the past quarter-century of discussion about God has made theistic belief easier in some respects and harder in others. It is somewhat widely supposed today that materialism is dead. Whereupon some leap to the conclusion that theism is triumphant. Which is a bit hasty.

The old materialism is dead. That old materialism was based upon a belief in atoms and hard-and-fast units of material stuff. As long as materialism had that basis of virtually omnipotent units of matter it had an easy time—especially since the assumption was largely conceded by the theists themselves. This assumption was fatal to any idealistic interpretation of the universe, as the debate was actually carried on. Chiefly through the discussion of the scientists themselves the old type of atom has been given up. Forces have taken the place of matter. An atom is now conceived of as a system of forces. A proton positively charged with electricity is the

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center around which negatively charged electrons revolve. The atoms are what might be called miniature solar systems, the orbits of the electrons being about in the same ratio to the diameters of the electrons as the orbit of the earth in the solar system to the diameter of the earth. The material has been replaced by forces. What seems to us matter is at bottom centers of incredibly intense forces.

It is no small relief to be freed from the tyranny of the older atomic theory. It is easier to think of God as acting through forces which are the expressions of his power than of him as the creator of matter of the lump kind. The doctrine of the divine immanence, of the immediate presence of God, fits in more easily with the newer view than with the old.

Still, there is no need of our befooling ourselves as to the extent of the help rendered by the later scientific utterances. Those utterances render their chief aid, as it seems to me, in laying a foundation for idealism, and in making larger scope for freedom. Just a few years ago we were hearing about an iron-clad and iron-bound system of law which, it was alleged, made nonsense of all notion of liberty of choice. Today physicists like Compton are openly teaching that law cannot be construed in any such tightness as this—that possibilities of free choice are abundant. Nevertheless, the revelation of the moral quality of the Free Mind of which the universe may, with the consent of an increasing number of scientists, be conceived as the expression, depends upon something other than our conception of that Mind as acting in forces rather than in material stuff. There is nothing in present-day science, however, which leads to the revelation of the moral life of God. Nothing has supplanted the need of Christ as the revealer of God.

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In fact, the scientists make the Christ-revelation more necessary than before, for they are talking of a universe immeasurably bigger than anything the imagination can conceive. It is amusing to see the air of importance of the scientists as they talk of a "finite" universe, and to note their scandalized impatience when they hear the philosopher insist upon infinity. When the finite is, in the hands of the scientist, altogether beyond our measurements or even our imagination, there is not much sense in the scientist's claim that he has done away with an infinite universe. Finite or infinite, the universe today is a tough problem for anybody's thinking. There is too much of it for any easy adjustment to human reason. The increase of our knowledge is an increase of mystery. The more we see through the telescope and the microscope and the spectroscope the less we know. We can seize the steps through which nature passes in her changes, but we can make less and less of what it is all about. The farther the physical light of the universe reaches the darker becomes the total problem.

For the genuine help toward theism today we have as always to look at what is clearly the increasing importance assigned to the human factors, either by direct statement or by implication. The scientific philosophers are showing signs of recovery from the tendency to disparage man on account of the earth which is the physical dwelling-place of man. How often have we been treated with patronizing condescension by scientists when we have ventured even a timid remark about the greatness of man! We have been reminded that the earth is in a sparsely settled back-country district in space, millions of light-years' distance away from the center. We do not hear so much of this type of patter as we once did.



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Nowadays the most strictly scientific of the scientists seems willing to make at least three concessions:

First, that man is the discoverer of all these limitations on himself. Quite likely nothing that man can ever create or invent can travel as fast as light, but it is man, and not light itself, that measures in terms of light-years. Man may be altogether insignificant, but he is significant enough to discover his own insignificance—which is in itself a mark of greatness. It is man himself who has created the standards and measures by which all things in the physical universe are judged.

Second, the earth is today looked upon as the only place in the universe, so far as our intelligence can reach, where the conditions make possible the appearance of an organism like the human body capable of being the instrument of intelligence. The earth is not the center of things in the old pre-Copernican sense. It revolves around the sun, and the sun is the center of a limited system, though itself probably far enough off from whatever may be the center of the universe. This old notion of a spatial central position of the earth is gone, but even the scientist concedes that the earthly conditions which make possible the appearance of human life constitute the earth a center in a higher sense than that of mere space relations.

Third, the current doctrine of relativity anew puts the mind of man at the center. To be sure, a strict interpretation of relativity makes it an affair of each individual mind. Nevertheless, the doctrine constitutes mind here on earth about as much a center as any theory can.

Out of all this mind has moved notably back toward the center. In addition, all of our present-day social enterprises are talking of human values and of nothing else. So that the theologians are taking new courage in thinking of our higher

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human faculties as the best key to the interpretation of the divine. Oddly enough, the most persistent question as to whether we can speak of God as personal or not is raised by some theological teachers. These teachers seem to feel that if we think of God as personal we are certain to carry into our theories about God such weakness of human personality as will make him inadequate as the supreme object of worship. We do indeed hear that God is personal, but more than personal. If this means more than any personal which we know in human experience, well and good; but just why the limitations of human personality—such as dependence upon a body, liability to increase and loss, and subjection to a thousand and one external forces—should be conceived of as affecting divine personality is a mystery.

The essentials of personality as such are self-consciousness and self-direction. When we think of God as personal we are thinking primarily of self-consciousness and of self-direction. Now the immensity of the grasp of a divine self-consciousness and a human self-consciousness would undoubtedly be so far apart as to make the two forms altogether different, yet both forms would be types of self-consciousness, and self-consciousness is of the essence of personal life. It is not at all necessary to suppose that divine self-consciousness labors under the limitations of growth and decay that mark the human consciousness. Loss of memory, of power of attention, of judgment, are peculiarities of human life possibly due to the mind's connection with a physical organism, but they are not essential marks of consciousness as such. There are thinkers who conceive of self-consciousness as an unworthy limitation of the divine, but their discussions often show that they are attributing traits of weakness in human consciousness to consciousness as such.

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Some antagonists of a self-conscious God tell us that impersonal forces are more majestic than any personal forces can ever be. Those of us who lived through the day when Herbert Spencer was the English high-priest of philosophy recall the ponderous eloquence with which Spencer used to employ this very argument, telling us that though thought is swift, light is swifter still! Yet, as far as we can see, light never becomes conscious of itself. It is consciousness that discovers how fast light travels.

Moreover, the impersonal is a clear enough idea, and the personal is intelligible enough, as a conception, I mean; but what idea can we attach to the "more than personal"?

The immediate duty of the holders of theism would seem to be to make the most of personality—especially in its higher manifestations—as the surest path to the understanding of the divine. It is not enough to speak of God as the sum of our ideals of the good and the true and the beautiful unless we are thinking of God as the ideals made real. Anybody can say that God is the ideal of the good, the true, and the beautiful, for almost anybody holds to some ideal of the good, the true, and the beautiful; but not everybody holds that the good, the true, and the beautiful are real in an actual God. The heart of the theistic problem is not as to whether there are ideals or not, but whether the ideals root in the universe as controlling reality. Is the universe friendly, or indifferent, or hostile to the good and the true and the beautiful? The answer of theism is a belief in an actual God, who is himself the true and the good and the beautiful made real, and who is making the ideals more and more real in the universe.

There is in some quarters this notion that God is just another name for an ideal of any sort. I once had an argu-

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ment with a professional baseball player, to whom I had a pastoral relation, on the question of Sunday professional baseball games. The ball-player waved me to one side with a gesture of finality: "Sunday baseball is my creed." It appeared after a few minutes that this man thought that all items of a creed were merely statements of ideals. He did not see why he could not appropriately call Sunday ball-playing his God.

I mention this incident not at all to imply that baseball players are not profound theologians, but to introduce the statement that many, many persons today take the same essential line as my ball-playing friend. They may indeed put a little more to their creed, but God is an ideal, or sum of ideals. The difficulty of this belief is that there is not enough of it. There is a long distance between thinking of God as an ideal and thinking of him as the one in whom our highest ideals are realized.

Another much-used phrase about God today is that God is a projection of our own ideals upon the universe. We project, out of our own minds, our ideal of God. We do not know what is real in the universe, but we fashion an idea of God and then stamp it upon the universe. This projection helps us to make adjustments, to make our lives better, and to make living easier. The question is not, we are told, whether there is any reality in our projection or not. We make the universe over according to our own vital needs.

This sounds very philosophic and learned. A psychologist some two or three years ago declared that with this projection theory the psychologists were putting their guns into position to blow God to pieces, God regarded, that is to say, in any other sense than just as a projection. According to the psychologist everything is projection. Which, of

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course, makes psychology a projection also, though this seems to psychologists to be a quibble. Fine points to one side, however, what about our neighbors? Are they projections upon the universe, or upon the parts of the universe near us, of our own ideas? Are we merely projections by the minds of our neighbors? If our neighbors are not merely projections, is the Great Neighbor necessarily a mere projection?

It will never do for us to forget, in all our discussions of the revelation of God, that we at last arrive at a point where all formal argument breaks down. Today there seems general consent that God, whether ideal or real, is the Good, the True, the Beautiful. Suppose, however, that a man is neither good nor true, and that he cares not for the beautiful. How would such a man receive a revelation of the good, the true, and the beautiful? Let us even suppose that the fact of God could be proved on every scientific and philosophic basis conceivable. Let us fancy that we could discover some sort of organism, some set of forces which would indubitably reveal themselves as the organ of a Supreme Mind. Let the fact of the divine existence become utterly clear. The real problem would still be before us—that as to the moral nature of God. It would always be possible to doubt the goodness of that scientifically revealed God. There are persons enough who today doubt the goodness of all whom the world calls good. The selfish, the cynical, the supercilious never can see any God worth seeing. It is not the fashion in these tolerant days to say this, but that does not change the truth. As of old, it is the one who doeth the will of God, with a purity of heart, that seeth God. Negative testimony to the effect that God cannot be seen with the inner eye is not important from those who seem to rejoice in that they possess no inner eye.

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It is becoming increasingly clear that in all this debate about God the strictly scientific and philosophic faculties do not have the last word. In the end we have to choose sides, and the choice of sides, once made, thereafter weights the scales of thinking. The universe has produced a Christ. Some of us think that this is the best achievement of the universe, and that in the achievement the universe is giving its best account of itself. Still, the significance of Christ as a revelation of the purpose of the universe, or of the God of the universe, depends upon the moral scales in which that significance is weighed, and scales are matters of choice.

We may as well remind ourselves that if God's existence as a person were capable of proof so as to satisfy all scientific and philosophic question, God could not be indubitably proved to be the moral person of Christian belief by such reasoning. The question could still remain, after science and philosophy had been fully satisfied, as to the moral character of God. Human nature is enough prone to revile the good and great to make possible a reviling of God, even if his personal existence were proved beyond the possibility of doubt. If there are human beings without power of moral discernment, those human beings might be able to comprehend the scientific and philosophic proofs of the divine existence without in the least being able to grasp his moral nature.

It is this moral nature of God that is of supreme concern. Does the ruler of the universe acknowledge the sway of moral obligation in his use of power? The growing moral sense today insists that God must be bound by bonds of moral responsibility as truly as are men. Abraham's question, Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? has more force today than ever before in the history of the race. This

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demand also is back of much of the theological trend just now toward what is called the finite God. Following hints thrown out by men like William James, the students of religious philosophy are protesting that a God infinite and absolute in the hard-and-fast etymological sense is not of much service to men. A good deal of the debate over this point is merely a discussion of words, for a God whose physical activities can be measured only in terms of light-years is not finite in any particularly cramping degree, and the use of the word infinite seems to put God at a distance. So the increasing attempt to bring God nearer to men moves on. James used to declare that we could not have a God of the living, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, until we should cease talking about the infinite and absolute.

I do not think we are losing our grip on the proper approach to God, in whatever terms we may think of him—that approach being free surrender to the highest moral ideal we can reach, an ideal which for the Christian is made real in Christ. There is considerable revival of mysticism as the sole path to the divine, some of it thoroughly non-Christian. The so-called heathen world abounds in mysticism, and not all mysticism leads to that fullness of life which is the mark of Christian experience. In any event the Christian approach to God is open to every one. The gospel word still holds good, that it is by doing of the will that we attain to knowledge of the truth.

THE RELIGIOUS SANCTION OF THE SOCIAL  
GOSPEL

*by*

THE REV. J. V. MOLDENHAWER, D.D.



**D**R. MOLDENHAWER'S *whole theme is summed up in this excerpt from his remarks: "If I were asked where our Western world got its most vivid sense of what—is 'social' and what 'anti-social,' I should unhesitatingly reply, 'Out of its religious tradition.'"*

## THE RELIGIOUS SANCTION OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL\*

by

THE REV. J. V. MOLDENHAWER, D.D.

MY ASSIGNMENT is to try to suggest the presumable value of the ideas which underlie our moral conduct, religiously speaking, in terms of a discovery of the way in which, in the actual course of events, religion has been competent to deal with what we call social behavior.

What I thought of immediately in connection with my assignment was the title of a chapter in a book, written some twenty years or so ago, by Henry Osborn Taylor, called *The Medieval Mind*. In this book, after, describing medieval ideas and showing much about the way the medieval mind longed for goodness and beauty, he wrote this chapter which he called "The Spotted Actuality," and ever since I first read that tremendous epithet it has remained in my mind as the most adequate description of the life we know as it is.

We are always living in the midst of the spotted actuality, yet there is for me a fundamental sophistry in the customary modernistic criticism of our "individualistic religion," as if this were to blame for the spotted actuality. The shortcomings of the popular dogma that originally religion and ethics are things apart is to me quite obvious.

Both Judaism and Christianity have been from the beginning profoundly ethical. The age-old ethical problems in-

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volved the eternally complex relations between persons, affecting, according to the knowledge and imagination of a given time, its visible areas of politics, economics, industry, and the home, whatever the words may have been by which these relationships were described. If we want an illustration in the field of the perfectly familiar, I think I may put it this way, and quite briefly. If we consider the biblical story of the Sons of Eli, the story of the shepherds of Israel who fed themselves, in the book of Ezekiel, we see that the denunciations are of precisely the same character as the denunciation of the wicked leaders of religion in *Piers Plowman*, and the passage about the Friar in the *Canterbury Tales*. The heaviest accusations against these men concern their selfishness and rapacity, as the ideal is that of compassion and unselfish service. The crux of the denunciation lay in the invocation of the wrath of God against all villainy, and the declaration of the tender love of God for all manner of poor and oppressed people. And the perverse assumption that religion can be pure in spite of indifference to social ethics is never made. On the contrary, it is dismissed with a bottomless intensity of fervor and an inexhaustible richness of vocabulary.

The one thing that our religion (and when I say our religion I mean Christianity and Judaism) characteristically is, above all else, is a conviction with respect to the radical and essential meaning to man's life of his experience as a being owing obligation to the God who made him and to his fellow creatures. And only the most radical heretics ever tried to deny this or to drag the two apart. If I were asked where our Western world got its most vivid sense of what we call, with a touch of pedantry, our notions of what is

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"social" and what "anti-social," I should unhesitatingly reply, "Out of its religious tradition, Hebrew and Christian."

It is even arguable that the scorned religious institution, in ancient Jewry and in medieval Catholicism, was the entity which was insistent in preserving a dominant sense of social actuality and social obligation, and that in the teeth of constant rebelliousness of over-individualistic persons bent merely upon having their own way and seeking their own profit. That would not be the whole truth, but it would be much nearer the truth than the statement that the religious institution, with its religious observance and worship of God was constantly beguiling men's minds away from the consideration of the ethical affairs of the actual world. And that is what we are always having to listen to.

Now let us turn to the time just past—say the last two or three centuries. Here I can bring you some pertinent illustrations of the way in which religious sanction has affected the question of morality—social and unsocial conduct. The citations may be called, if you will, rather literary than historical. These are my witnesses. First, a courtly Anglican priest of the Seventeenth Century; second, an American Quaker, of the Eighteenth Century; third, a Parliamentary report, of the Nineteenth Century; and finally, a famous English novelist, of the Nineteenth Century, but about fifteen or twenty years later than the date of the Parliamentary report. I think it ought to be clear to anyone that I could have piled the evidence as high as the Empire State Building, if I had had the time and inclination, and depended on the possibility of talking without any limit. If I have selected these few illustrations, it is chiefly because of reasons which I shall be able

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to indicate as I lay them before you, and follow them with what I trust will be a reasonably brief comment.

The first quotation, then, is from the Anglican priest of the Seventeenth Century.

Obedience to human laws must be for conscience' sake: that is, because in such obedience public order, and charity, and benefit, is concerned, and because the law of God commands us: therefore we must make a conscience in keeping the just laws of superiors: and although the matter before the making of the law was indifferent, yet now the obedience is not indifferent; but next to the laws of God we are to obey the laws of all our superiors, who the more public they are, the first they are to be in the order of obedience.

Human laws are not to be broken with scandal, nor at all without reason; for he that does it causelessly is a despiser of the law, and undervalues the authority. For human laws differ from divine laws principally in this: first that the positive commands of a man may be broken upon smaller and more reasons than the positive commands of God; we may upon a smaller reason omit to keep any of the fasting-days of the church, than omit to give alms to the poor: only this, the reason must bear weight according to the gravity and concernment of the law;

We must not be too busy in examining the prudence and unreasonableness of human laws; for although we are not bound to believe them all to be the wisest, yet if by enquiring into the lawfulness of them, or by any other instrument, we find them to fail of that wisdom with which some others are ordained, yet we must never make use of it to disparage the person of the lawgiver, or to countenance any man's disobedience, much less our own.

Let no prices be heightened by the necessity or unskilfulness of the contractor: for the first is direct uncharitableness to the person, and injustice in the thing, because the man's

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necessity could not naturally enter into the consideration of the value of the commodity; and the other is deceit and oppression: much less must any man make necessities, as by engrossing a commodity, by monopoly, by detaining corn, or the like indirect arts; for such persons are unjust to all single persons with whom in such cases they contract, and oppressors of the public.

In intercourse with others, do not do all which you may lawfully do, but keep something within thy power: and because there is a latitude of gain in buying and selling, take not thou the utmost penny that is lawful, or which thou thinkest so; for although it be lawful, yet it is not safe; and he that gains all that he can gain lawfully this year, possibly next year will be tempted to gain something unlawfully.

He that sells dearer by reason he sells not for ready money, must increase his price no higher than to make himself recompense for the loss which according to the rules of trade he sustained by his forbearance, according to common computation; reckoning in also the hazard, which he is prudently, warily, and charitably, to estimate. But although this be the measure of his justice, yet because it happens either to their friends, or to necessitous and poor persons, they are in these cases to consider the rules of friendship and neighborhood, and the obligations of charity, lest justice turn into unmercifulness.

Let no man for his own poverty become more oppressing and cruel in his bargain, but quietly, modestly, diligently, and patiently, recommend his estate to God, and follow its interest, and leave the success to Him: for such courses will more probably advance his trade; they will certainly procure him a blessing and a recompense, and if they cure not his poverty, they will take away the evil of it; and there is nothing else in it that can trouble him.

Religiously keep all promises and covenants though made

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to your disadvantage, though afterwards you perceive you might have been better; and let not any precedent act of yours be altered by any after accident. Let nothing make you break your promise, unless it be unlawful, or impossible; that is, either out of your natural, or out of your civil power, yourself being under the power of another; or that it be intolerably inconvenient to yourself, and of no advantage to another; or that you have leave expressed, or reasonably presumed.

Let no man take wages or fees for a work that he cannot do, or cannot with probability undertake, or in some sense profitably and with ease or with advantage manage.

Let no man appropriate to his own use what God by a special mercy, or the republic, hath made common; for that is both against justice and charity too.

Notice the facts. First, the character type of the writer. He is a singularly religious man whose primary interest is what we might call pure religion. The book out of which I quoted is entitled *Holy Living* and is known as one of the great devotional books in the English language. The relatively new nature of the situation is to be observed in a community not quite used to what we describe as the capitalistic system. Note also the essentially open-minded, imaginative way in which Jeremy Taylor applies his Christian principles, his religious sanctions to the difficult and troublesome questions of which he is aware. And note the vivid warmth that his deeply religious feeling and thought lends to the conscientiousness of his consideration.

The next citation is from the Eighteenth Century Quaker. He is telling about his voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

As my lodging in the Stearage, now near a week, hath afforded me sundrey opportunities of seeing, hearing and

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feeling, with respect to the life and Spirt of many poor Sailors, an inward exercise of Soul hath attended me, in regard to placing our Children and youth where they may be likely to be exampled and instructed in pure fear of the Lord; and I being much amongst the Sea men, have from a motion of love, sundrey times taken opportunities with one alone, and in a free conversation, laboured to turn their head toward the fear of the Lord and this day we had a meeting in the Cabbin where my heart was contrite under a feeling of divine Love.

Now concerning Lads being trained up as Seamen, I believe a communication from one part of the world to some other parts of it, by sea, is at times consistent with the will of our Heavenly Father; and to Educate some youth in the practice of Sailing, I believe may be right; but how lamentable is the present corruption of the world! How impure are the Channels through which trade hath a Conveyance! How great is that danger to which poor lads are now exposed, when placed on Shipboard to learn the Art of sailing!

Five lads, training up for the Seas, were now on board this Ship, two of them brought up amongst our Society, one of which hath a right amongst friends, by name James Nailor, to whose father James Nailor mentioned in Sewel's History, appears to have been uncle. I often feel a tenderness of heart toward these poor lads, and at times, look at them as though they were my Children according to the flesh.

O that all may take heed and beware of Covetousness! O that all may learn of Christ who is meek and low of Heart! Then in faithfully following him, he will teach us to be content with food and raiment, without respect to the customs of honours of this world. Men thus redeemed will feel a tender concern for their fellow creatures, and a desire that those in the lowest stations may be assisted and encouraged. And where owners of Ships attain to the perfect Law of



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Liberty, and are doers of the word these will be blessed in their deeds.

The book is the *Journal of John Woolman*, which has among other distinctions that of being included in the famous five-foot book shelf. His central interest is ethical religion. He is quite incapable of believing that religion has any more native or important function than that of fostering right living, especially right relations between human beings. And he is no less incapable of believing that the religious sanction, the sense of moving under the impulse of a just and good God, could possibly be less than the Supreme sanction.

His chief interest has been, up to this time, slavery in America, but his mind, an alert, religious mind, resists the insinuating temptations to be a moral crusader and keeps him quick to mark every crisis, to meet every situation in which are the elements of the old trouble. And no one can read the *Journal* without noting that the prime reality is his sense of the ever compelling righteous will of God.

The next citation is from a Parliamentary report. This is the report of Sadler's Committee in about the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century.

The Report of Sadler's Committee is a classical document; it is one of the main sources of our knowledge of the conditions of factory life at the time. Its pages bring before the reader in the vivid form of dialogue the kind of life that was led by the victims of the new system. Men and women who were old at twenty, from all the industrial districts, from Manchester, from Glasgow, from Huddersfield, from Dundee, from Bradford, from Leeds, passed before their rulers with their tale of weariness, misery, and diseased and twisted limbs. A worsted spinner of Huddersfield, Joseph Hebergam, aged seventeen, described his day's work at the age of seven.

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His hours were from five in the morning to eight at night, with one solitary break of thirty minutes at noon. All other meals had to be taken in snatches, without any interruption of work. "Did you not become very drowsy and sleepy towards the end of the day and feel much fatigued?" "Yes; that began about three o'clock; and grew worse and worse, and it came to be very bad towards six and seven." "What means were taken to keep you at your work so long?" "There were three overlookers; there was one a head overlooker, and there was one man kept to grease the machines, and there was one kept on purpose to strap." His brother, who worked in the same mill, died at sixteen from spinal affection, due to his work, and he himself began to grow deformed after six months of it. "How far do you live from the mill?" "A good mile." "Was it very painful for you to move?" "Yes, in the morning I could scarcely walk, and my brother and sister used, out of kindness, to take me under each arm, and run with me to the mill, and my legs dragged on the ground; in consequence of the pain I could not walk." Another witness, an overseer in a flax spinning mill at Dundee, said that there were nine workers in the room under his charge who had begun work before they were nine years old, and that six of them were splay-footed and the other three deformed in other ways. A tailor at Stanningley, Samuel Coulson, who had three daughters in the mill, described the life of his household when the mill was busy. In the ordinary time the hours were from six in the morning to half-past eight at night; in the brisk time, for six weeks in the year, these girls, the youngest of them "going eight," worked from three in the morning to ten or half-past ten at night. "What was the length of time they could be in bed during those long hours?" "It was near eleven o'clock before we could get them into bed after getting a little victuals, and then at morning my mistress used to stop up all night, for fear that we could not

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get them ready for the time; sometimes we have gone to bed and one of us generally awoke." "Were the children excessively fatigued by this labour?" "Many times; we have cried often when we have given them the little victualling we had to give them; we had to shake them, and they have fallen asleep with the victuals in their mouths many a time."

Another witness, Gillett Sharpe, described how his boy, who had been very active and a good runner, gradually lost the use of his limbs at the mill. "I had three steps up into my house and I have seen that boy get hold of the sides of the door to assist his getting up into the house; many a one advised me to take him away; they said he would be ruined and made quite a cripple; but I was a poor man, and could not afford to take him away, having a large family, six children under my care."

From the Report of the Commission of 1840-1842:

In every district except North Staffordshire, where the younger children were needed in the Potteries, the employment of children of seven was common, in many pits children were employed at six, in some at five, and in one case a child of three was found to be employed. Even babies were sometimes taken down into the pits to keep the rats from their father's food. The youngest children were employed as trappers; that is, they were in charge of the doors in the galleries, on the opening and closing of which the safety of the mine depended. For the ventilation of the mine was contrived on a simple principle; there were two shafts, one the downcast, the other the upcast. A fire was lighted at the foot of the upcast to drive the air up the shaft, and air was sucked down through the downcast to fill the vacuum. This air was conducted by means of a series of doors through all the workings of the mine on its passage to the upcast, and these doors were in the charge of a little boy or girl, who sat

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in a small hole, with a string in his or her hand, in darkness and solitude for twelve hours or longer at a time. "Although this employment," reported the Commission, "scarcely deserves the name of labour, yet as the children engaged in it are commonly excluded from light, and are always without companions, it would, were it not for the passing and re-passing of the coal carriages, amount to solitary confinement of the worst order."

Children were also employed to push the small carriages filled with coals along the passages, and as the passages were often very low and narrow, it was necessary to use very small children for this purpose. "In many mines which are at present worked, the main gates are only from 24 to 30 inches high, and in some parts of these mines the passages do not exceed 18 inches in height. In this case not only is the employment of very young children absolutely indispensable to the working of the mine, but even the youngest children must necessarily work in a bent position of the body." As a rule the carriages were pushed along small iron railways, but sometimes they were drawn by children and women, "harnessed like dogs in a gcart," and moving, like dogs, on all fours. Another children's task was that of pumping water in the underbottom of pits, a task that kept children standing ankle-deep in water for twelve hours. In certain districts children were used for a particularly responsible duty. In Derbyshire and parts of Lancashire and Cheshire it was the custom to employ them as engine men, to let down and draw up the cages in which the population of the pit descended to its depths and returned to the upper air. A "man of discretion" required 30s. a week wages; these substitutes only cost 5s. or 7s. a week. Accidents were, of course, frequent,—on one occasion three lives were lost because a child engineman of nine turned away to look at a mouse at a critical moment,—and the Chief Constable

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of Oldham said that the coroners declined to bring in verdicts of gross neglect from pity for the children.

The citation is from Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's volume, *Charles Dickens and Other Victorians*, in the chapter called, "The Victorian Background." The situation, in all its horror, is new. Be sure to get this—the *situation is new*. It had emerged before men realized how bad it was, or how callous men could be made by the terrific competition of the new machine age.

Note again, the spirit is that of vivid humanitarianism, eloquent—terribly so, almost in spite of itself—for we are reading a Parliamentary Report. The energy given it is furnished by the religious earnestness of those behind the reform movement—chiefly two men—Michael Sadler and the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. And if you want to know what the so-called motivation (a word I hate like poison) is, in the mind of that very great man, Lord Shaftesbury, all you have to do is to read the article in the encyclopedia and you find him to have been a notably religious man, and it is his religion that drives him with unflagging zeal along the path.

They, being sensitive minds, are not for a moment in doubt that the old sanctions have to do with the new "situation." In fact it is plain to see that both these men find it perfectly intolerable to pretend to be religious without caring for these things.

The last citation is from a novel. I hope there are many of my unintellectual or intellectual friends who still love Charles Dickens. Anyway, it is one of his pathetic passages. There are some that I can't bear, but in spite of its rhetorical character, this seems to retain a beautiful persuasiveness to all the native and decently tender instincts of men.

You picture this poor wastrel of the streets, on his death

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bed, with his friend, a man of another circle, and a higher circle of life, by his side.

"It's turned very dark, sir. Is there any light a-comin'?"

"It is coming fast, Jo."

"Fast. The cart is shaken all to pieces, and the rugged road is very near its end."

"Jo, my poor fellow!"

"I hear you, sir, in the dark, but I'm a gropin'—a gropin'—let me catch hold of your hand."

"Jo, can you say what I say?"

"I'll say anything as you say, sir, for I knows it's good."

"Our Father."

"Our Father!—yes, that's very good, sir."

"Which art in Heaven."

"Art in Heaven—is the light a-comin', sir?"

"It is close at hand. Hallowed be thy name!"

"Hallowed be—thy—"

The light is come upon the dark benighted way. Dead!

Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends, and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day.

The book is *Bleak House*. Now, remember the writer is Charles Dickens, a man not at all noted for his attachment to Ecclesiastical Christianity. But the voice is the voice of religion in the great mood common to Judaism and Christianity. And it does not doubt that what has to deal with Jo and his kind is "heavenly compassion." The religious sanction is quite alive, and morally alert, and morally competent.

If I am told after this that of course the working of the religious sanction is very slow, I shall not ever argue. I admit it. That is characteristic of any process, in these our human

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affairs. But to point out the tardiness and procrastination of religious men is not to demonstrate the incompetence of the religious sanction.

If the question is whether we might not relegate God or God's will to the background, I can only say that this is a queer suggestion to come from teachers of religion. Our faith is our passion, and the passionate faith of those who see right conduct in terms of the will of God is this: that everything in our aspirations (if that word has not also been excluded from the fashionable vocabulary) is fortified, dignified, and energized by the conviction that God is with us to comfort, direct, and sustain us when we seek the good, to restrain, rebuke, and punish when we try to be content with evil.

I am going to close with a favorite story of mine. It appeared in *The Outlook*, years and years ago—it may even have been in the days when *The Outlook* was *The Christian Union*—before it unhappily changed its mind as to the propriety of that as a name for a weekly periodical. It is a story that I especially like because it was translated from the Danish, which is one of my native tongues.

It is about a spider. The little spider is said to have come out one morning, a bright, beautiful morning, to run about his web and take account of its condition. He found little gems of dewdrops with the sunshine sparkling on them. He ran about apparently testing the delicate contrivance to see if all were well.

All seems indeed to be well until suddenly he finds himself darting swiftly up a strand that goes straight up into the air. He runs up a distance. He cannot find where it is fastened, and he runs down puzzled, because he is a tidy-minded little spider and he likes to know where everything

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belongs. Again he runs up, this time a little farther. Still he is clearly not at the end of it, and again he runs back. Then his sense of decency and order and all things shipshape seizes upon him and he says, "That thing isn't serving any use. Where did it come from?"—quite forgetting that once upon a time that was the strand by which he came down. And so, in an outburst of efficient rage, he bites the strand in two, and his whole charming and effective little house collapses.





**THE STEP BEYOND**

*by*

**THE REV. HAROLD COOKE PHILLIPS**

*"THE solemn truth is that the evils which infest and harass human life will not be removed till some more worthy motive possesses us. A motive that inspires us to take the step beyond. The burdens of economic inequalities, racial injustices, the peril of nationalism—in short, all those social evils which bring profit to the few while they impoverish the many, await the Christian ethic."*

## THE STEP BEYOND

*by*

THE REV. HAROLD COOKE PHILLIPS

TEXT—Matthew xxvi. 38,39. *Tarry ye here . . . and He went a little farther.*

THERE is a sentence describing Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is at once simple and profound. Whenever one reads again the story of that inner struggle, he feels that the place whereon he stands is holy ground, and that his attitude to that experience, if not one of reticence, should certainly be one of reserve. It was there in the silence of the night, while his disciples slept, that Jesus won that spiritual victory, in the calm assurance of which he could steadily face the injustices and cruelties of a misguided world. Into the profound meaning of that experience we do not enter, but I think we have the key to it. It is given to us in these words: "Tarry ye here . . . and He went a little farther."

These three disciples, let us remember, were the ones who shared most intimately the purpose of his life. But even they could not go the full length of this experience. After all, the great moments of life are lonely moments. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, whose poetry possesses true insight, writes plaintively:

"There are brilliant heights of sorrow  
That only the few may know;  
And the lesser woes of the world, like waves,

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Break noiselessly, far below.  
I hold in my own possessing,  
A mount that is lone and still—  
The great high place of a hopeless grief,  
And I call it my 'Heart-Break Hill.'  
And once on a winter's midnight  
I found its highest crown,  
And there in the gloom, my soul and I,  
Weeping, we sat us down."

This was one of those "brilliant heights of sorrow." To such heights we always go unaccompanied—"my soul and I." "Tarry ye here . . . and He went a little farther."

"A little farther." How far was it? Not very far, by our methods of computing distance. Luke says it was only a stone's throw. Not very far, but a great distance. It was not very far from the top of Mount Sinai, where Moses was discovering the great truths of ethical monotheism, to the plains below where Aaron was making his golden calf. Not very far, but a tremendous distance. It was not very far from the upper room at Jerusalem, where the apostles were experiencing the power of the spirit of God, to the noisy streets below where the thoughtless crowd surged by. Not very far, but a tremendous distance. It was not very far from the dormitories at Williams College where the students slept, to the old haystack at the edge of the campus—but what a distance that was! For it was where that monument now stands that four students, Samuel Mills, James Richards, Luther Rice and Gordon Hall, gathered night after night for prayer, and as a result of those meetings the whole American foreign missionary movement had its birth. In like manner, it was not very far from the disciples, who tarried here, to Jesus, who went a little farther. But what a distance that

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was! Here were men asleep, yonder a lonely soul keeping his vigil. Here companionship, yonder solitude. Here were men quite unaware of all that was involved, yonder a courageous soul wrestling with reality and surrendering his will to God.

We are living in a universe whose infinite spaces frighten us. We speak of stars that are millions of light years from the earth. So vast are the spaces of the universe that they tend "to choke our prayers." But they need not. For I wonder, after all, if it may not turn out to be that the real distances of life are not spacial, but spiritual; not quantitative, but qualitative; and that the significant fact of life is not immensity, but intensity.

A little farther. That is life's tremendous distance. It marks the difference between those who walk the beaten path and those who pioneer; between those who are afraid and those who are courageous; between those who accept things as they are and those who see things as they ought to be; between those who are content to be simply followers and those who possess the quality of creative leadership. Indeed someone has truly asked, "What is the secret of great men? Is it not this: that they have gone just a step farther than their fellows? Is it not that they have put upon themselves and their tasks just that touch of consecration which their fellows lack?" One is inclined to say that this was the difference between Erasmus and Luther. Both were great men. Yes, but one was much greater. Both lived at a critical period in the world's history. When the crisis came Erasmus said, "I intend to be true to the truth as far as the times will allow." Martin Luther, however, went a little farther. Yes, and that made all the difference in the world. It meant the birth of Protestantism and the revival of evangelical religion. Jesus once said to a young man, "Thou art not far from the

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Kingdom of God." Not far, but very far. One remembers those lines of Browning. No wonder Alfred Tennyson said he wished he had written them:

"The little more and how much it is,  
The little less and what worlds away."

"Take an illustration from the making of a hill," wrote Confucius. "A simple basketful is wanting, to complete it, and the work stops. So I stop short." "Take an illustration from the levelling of the ground. Suppose again just one basketful is left, when the work has so progressed. There I desist!" "Blade, but no bloom—or else bloom but no produce; aye, that is the way with some." Not with some, Confucius, but with many! Dr. E. Stanley Jones describes India as the land of "almost". But surely not India alone. We all live in that land. I sometimes think we are like men struggling up a mountain. We are almost within reach of its summit. We have gone far enough up to make it impossible for us to go back. And it is difficult to go higher. The result is that the mountain itself obstructs the vision which its summit would reveal. Jesus went a little farther. He took life's hardest step, the step beyond. He had peace where we have turmoil; certainty where we have questionings; power where we are impotent. In spite of all the world could do he could triumphantly say at last, "I have overcome the world." But we are for the most part buffeted and often frustrated.

Now, mark you, this is not an isolated incident in the life of Jesus. This is really the essence of Christianity. Let me suggest one or two of the ways in which Jesus has gone a little farther.

Take, for example, the matter of ethics. Jesus did not come into an unethical world. Not at all. But the ethics of

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the world into which Jesus came might well be described as a slot machine ethics. You drop in your coin and get the precise equivalent in return. It was cold, mechanical, exact and exacting.

How many are the illustrations that one might give! A disciple said to Confucius, "Laocius says we should do good to those who do harm to us. What say you?" Confucius replied, "No, recompense evil with evil, and good with good, but if ye requite the unjust with justice, with what shall ye reward the just?" Egyptian bas-reliefs represent the victor standing with his foot planted on the neck of his captive. Cicero was one of the most kindly spirits of antiquity, and yet even he could so gloat over the misfortunes of his enemy that after the death of Claudius, he dated a letter "The 560th day after the battle of Bovillae"—the battle in which Claudius was killed. The Roman Triumph, with its "naked ostentation of revenge", may fairly indicate the common feelings of the ancient world.

That was the ethic of the world to which Jesus came. Jesus looked at that, and he went a little farther. He took the step beyond. He preached the Sermon on the Mount. ✓ No one can read that sermon without catching its meaning, which is: Go a little farther. Do more than is expected of you. We find such sentences as these: "Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy, but I say unto you", go a little farther, "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that spitefully use you." "For if you love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"

More than others! That is the challenge of Christianity.



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It lies in the distance between here and yonder. It is the difference between duty and love. "Love never says, 'I have done enough,' but always asks, 'What more may I do?'" "When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do." If a man is kind to me and I in turn am kind to him, there is nothing Christian in that. That is just common decency. If a man is my friend, helps me, and I in turn help him, that is not Christian. That is just ordinary politeness. No, Christianity lies just beyond that, a little farther. Yes, but a great distance.

Let me suggest, moreover, that Christ has gone a little farther in matters of brotherhood. Jesus did not come into a world that was entirely unbrotherly. There was brotherhood in the world, within limits. Romans were held together by the proud tie of Roman citizenship. The Greeks practiced brotherhood within Grecian boundaries, but they regarded the rest of the world as barbarians. The Jews were brothers to each other, but they had no dealings with the Samaritans. Not only was there racial exclusiveness, but social as well. The Scribes and Pharisees had no dealings with the publicans and sinners. Brotherhood there was in the world into which Jesus came, but it was brotherhood of little landlocked pools—fraternal feelings within the group, but each group isolated from the other groups.

Jesus looked at that and he went a little farther. He moved outside of these beggarly boundaries. He has given us the idea of brotherhood, which is not that of isolated pools, but is like the ocean, in which there is a free commingling of all the waters. How truly does St. Paul say, "He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us"! "They shall come," said he, "from the east and from the west, and shall

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sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." "Who is my neighbor?" he was asked, and in answer he told the story of the good Samaritan, a story which shows that human brotherhood is something that lies beyond the narrow boundaries of class or race or creed. Rightly has it been said, "The margin of spiritual profit lies beyond the field of commands, beyond the point of even moral obligations, in the area of graces freely and finely exercised."

A little farther. Have we travelled that distance? Let it be said in all fairness that this step beyond is not easy. It is the most difficult a man ever takes. It was not easy for Christ. No one can read that story of the Garden of Gethsemane and believe that there is anything easy about it. "If it be possible," he said, "let this cup pass from me." And the reason why it is not easy is obvious. No man can go a little farther without giving up some of his rights. And there is nothing that is harder to relinquish. If there is one thing about which we are supersensitive it is our rights.

Well, what right had Jesus to take this step? What do we hear him saying about his rights when the rabble hounded him, Pilate sentenced him, soldiers tormented him and finally crucified him? He answered not a word. He gave up every right, except one: The right to choose the way of heroic love. "For their sakes." Was not that the secret of his life?

I think it can be stated as an indisputable fact that every step of social progress and well-being makes inroads upon our personal rights. Inevitably so. Take a few commonplace examples. We are trying to make our cities more safe for pedestrians. To do this we put in traffic lights. Every time we put in one of those lights we infringe on somebody's rights. He would like to go on. But he must stop. This is

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the individual's concession to social well-being. Plagues do not spread in our modern cities as they used to years ago. The infected family is now immediately quarantined. They cannot leave their house, nor can their friends visit them. They give up their rights. Society demands it and they gladly acquiesce. It seems the right thing to do.

Now one wonders whether this same principle does not apply equally to ethical as well as physical ills. Who can think of our social life today without recognizing at its heart some moral malady? Shall I briefly paint the picture? Millions have lost their lifelong savings. Other millions, unkempt, discouraged, demoralized, walk the streets, objects of charity. Multitudes have lost their homes. Many have been evicted. Homes are broken, families separated. Men suffer in dumb submissiveness, hardly knowing what to think. Now no one diagnosis, perchance, exhausts this ailment. And yet can it not be said that if such conditions are removed many people will have to give up their rights? The right, for example, of unlimited profit. The pioneer gospel of "rugged individualism" has served its day well. Its social inadequacy today, however, is too evident to be stressed.

Or apply the same principle to disarmament. The nations gather at Geneva in an effort to rid the world of the curse of war. What is the ethic of that conference? Is it unfair to say that it is the slot machine ethic? "We will give up so many cruisers if you will give up so many submarines." We will do thus and so provided you do thus and so. Each nation dropping in its little coin and expecting in return a neat and tidy package! Each nation insisting upon its own rights. And it would seem as if it had a right to do so. That statement I will not question, except to say that until some nobler ethic appears, future conferences will be no more

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successful than past ones. When war is upon us we gladly give up our rights, even our right to live. If peace comes something of that uncalculating abandon will have to pull us out of our miserly calculation.

Prohibition is another example. Truly a "noble experiment" which it appears for the moment is failing. But might it be possible that it is we who have failed? The nobility of that experiment lies in the fact that it attempts to put social well-being before personal tastes. It aims at freeing society from that insidious Octopus, the liquor traffic, in whose foul tentacles our political and social life has been enmeshed. But once more social well-being bows the knee to our little God, personal rights. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" So cried the silversmiths of Ephesus, when Paul with his message of abundant life threatened to remove their source of personal gain. But Diana, vociferously defended by those who saw that in her downfall the source of their gain was gone, was not great. She was a shapeless block. "Alas! alas!" cries Robertson of Brighton, "for the man who feels nothing more grand in this wondrous divine world than his own rights!"

The solemn truth is that the evils which infest and harass human life will not be removed till some more worthy motive possesses us. A motive that inspires us to take the step beyond. The burdens of economic inequalities, racial injustice, the peril of nationalism,—in short, all those social evils which bring profit to the few while they impoverish the many, await the Christian ethic. These open sores will be healed when a new spirit, which brings a new outlook, takes hold of us. It will be the spirit of Him who long ago did not squint at life, but saw it whole. To that heavenly vision He was not disobedient. He gave up the immediate for the

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ultimate, personal gain for social good, safety for adventure, the kingdoms of the world for a cross. Why? "For the joy that was set before him." The joy of initiating an age in which the unspeakable tragedies of unbridled selfishness and greed would give way to the reign of sanity and love. It is no mean thing to join the company of those who, lured by the unfading vision of a better world, count its coming dearer than life itself. Was this why He went a little farther?

Men who defend their rights never die on crosses!

I cannot close without reminding you that in this step beyond Jesus was not alone. God was there. He triumphed in that experience because even in the gloom he could say, "My Father." In plain truth one needs to make the ethical, social and religious adventures that Jesus made, would he discover the God whom Jesus served. "Only the cowardly wait for faith to come to them. The brave go out to achieve it for themselves. . . . In order to have any grounds for believing that the universe will sustain the hero, one must first be a hero." True words. Does not the life of Jesus assure us that God, the Ultimate Reality, sustains us in the life of self-forgetting love? If we tarry here, securely moored in the shallows, we shall not find the God of Jesus. In truth, we shall not need him. The spiritual values of life are not luxuries which we cuddle. They are not dropped in our laps. They are won. The perennial appeal of Christianity to our sluggish souls is to courage and joyous adventure. The step beyond may take us from familiar moorings and from the companionship of those who sleep. But One who neither slumbers nor sleeps will be there, to match our faith with his faithfulness. For it was this very experience which threatened to extinguish His life like a candle, that has made Him

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the Light of the World. "Faithful is he that calleth you. . . ."

"Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul  
May keep the path, but will not reach the goal,  
While he who walks in love may wander far  
But God will bring him where the blessed are."



YOU AT YOUR BEST

*by*

THE REV. PAUL SCHERER, D.D.



“**A**ND here we are, you and I, sitting down in the midst of conditions which we know are all wrong, wondering why God allows such things to be. There’s only one reason: He’s being kept out of the picture,—sometimes quite deliberately! There are too few people around the place who are in any sense at all at His disposal!”

## YOU AT YOUR BEST

by

THE REV. PAUL SCHERER, D.D.

TEXT—Romans xii. 1 and 2. *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*

THERE is a good deal of satisfaction even in looking one's best. It was part of the subtle change that Sunday used to bring, when we still had a suit that was "wholly other", and put it on, and stood up in the wide world's face, and all the gigantic stars, and felt more at home with God! But what concerns Paul is that these Romans should *be* at their best,—which is considerably more than *looking* it. If you should ask me to *translate rather freely* in my own words what he writes to them here, I should say we might read it something like this:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you put yourselves at His disposal body and soul,—not a dead sacrifice such as the Jews make, but a sacrifice that is living: which is *the way* you can best worship Him in spirit and in truth. And do not model yourselves after the changing fashions of this world, but let God transform at its source your manner of looking at things, your mind and your conscience: so that you may be able in your own

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experience both to discern and to prove His will, how good and pleasing and utterly complete it is.

There seemed to be *no other chance*, in the world as Paul knew it,—which was going so thoroughly and so promptly to pieces,—no other chance, as far as *he* could make out at least, of anybody's ever being able to get through. Life was calling for the sort of approach that very few people were making, and there was no "by your leave" about it. He took to *pleading*, here in his hands the *picture* he had drawn for them, not the man of the hour so much as the man of the future, if there should happen to *be* any future. And interestingly enough it wasn't an idealized portrait of someone he had set himself to imagine. That would have left him very little contact with reality. He did what one in his position I dare say was *bound* to do: he reached around in his own past until he laid his grip on the qualities which he himself had found to be most decisive in the shaping of human life and human destiny. I am not surprised therefore to discover that what he urges on them reads like an *autobiography* of almost photographic accuracy. Out of his earnest, impassioned appeal his own features, modestly because quite unconsciously, seem to put themselves together and take shape: body and soul at God's disposal, your way of looking at things all changed about, and a will being wrought so good, so utterly complete!

No use for us here then to ask if it's possible: it's been done! No use to call it a dream! It's flesh and blood! It's Paul, tearing at his sin, fighting down his thorn, an uglier world than ours in front of his face, and God in his eyes! *Not for me*, you whisper to yourself, and cower back in your corner: I am too frail. "*Who* is weak", he flings at you over his shoulder, "and *I* am not weak?" *You shake your head:*

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too many obstacles in the way. "Stripes, prison, stones, shipwreck, hunger is mine!" And there is your *quick temper*: you aren't the kind of person at all! He turns round and looks at you: "*Who* is offended and *I* burn not?" If we don't *want* to be like this heroic figure standing there where two worlds met, let's *say* so, and quit taking refuge in all this whining complaint about it's not being practical. "As for *me*", and he dismisses it with a gesture, "I *glory* in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me".

I. I wonder if we could accommodate ourselves to his view? It's a thing the Christian community has *talked about* for twenty centuries; but it rarely seems to become noticeably involved with anybody's way of living. Here is a man who looks out over his generation and can't think of anything else but the will of God for it. If you suppose it was because no other solution was being offered just then you are wrong. Society was full of remedies as a morning newspaper. There was the *Roman* tradition which insisted that the whole affair was properly a matter of government. The more cultured classes inclined to the *Greek* ideal, and stressed the importance of education. The *Jews* were moralists, patriots too who would fight at the drop of a hat, a one hundred per cent blistery nation that had fallen into the habit of using God for its own purposes. There were atheists and Orientalists, philosophers and modernists. And Paul saw no hope in *any* of it. What *counted* with him was the mind of this Eternal God, and whether or not he could help bring a bewildered world into harmony with it. They called him a fool for his pains, and made all manner of fun of him as he went about with his story of a despised Galilean. What had *that* to do with a *situation* which had manifestly got beyond control? It was as though someone had taken to peddling

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smelling-salts at the battle of the Marne! Across to Cyprus, all through Asia Minor, over into Greece, one day westward to Rome,—and strange groups of humble people began meeting in one another's houses. Letters were carried back and forth. There was something in the world to *live* for,—and if they had to *die*, why then let it be with a *song* on their lips!

We know *now* how Life swung aside into the path that he blazed until it became a highway; then straggled out only to come pressing back again at the Reformation. *Four hundred years* have passed since, and it takes no surveyor's instruments to show us how far off the road *we've* come! Who cares *really*, beyond a pious acknowledgment now and then, *what* God's will is, either for the world or for his own life? Who has any idea at all that it would be of any practical use in straightening out our difficulties? It's well enough to *preach* on it, but who knows anything about it? If we want to get out of this labyrinth we have to make a study of the social trends of the last century in two or three volumes, with thirteen supplementary carrying the figures! What we are going to *do* with it is not quite clear. But you can't come any of your *Gospel simplicity* over *us*: *we're complicated!* The *will* of God! For Sunday meditation, yes; you won't get it to go in business, or in politics, or in international relations, or in economics. And all the while this apostle's counter-thesis is simply that the man is a blind fool who thinks he can ever get anything *else* to go! Over against *your* will for your life is *God's* will for it. Over against *your* idea of what organized society should be and do is *God's* idea. *You* make the *choice*, and *History* will be the *judge!* There are plenty of results on *both* sides, if you care to examine them,—*man's* way and *His* way, each has had

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its sequel in the past, and they are both yielding an abundant harvest still. *You* do the *choosing*. *Stop* here only long enough to bow your head at what one wild heart is saying, as in rarely acquiescent mood it squares itself to the choice:

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is,

What if my leaves are falling like its own?

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,

My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

II. Meanwhile there is *very little room* for any uncertainty as to what that will of God is. Put yourself, body and soul, at His disposal, writes Paul: you'll find *out* that way. No other sort of worship has any significance at all, the hymns you sing, the prayers you offer. The only *real religious question* in the *world* is whether or not, if God means to accomplish something in your home, or among your acquaintances, He can accomplish it through *you*. Does He already have in you what He's looking for, or will He have to search farther? He never *has* been able to do anything until He could find a man or a woman willing to be used. Something *happened* when He found *Moses*! One day He tried to get near *Nineveh*; but He had to wait for *Jonah* to change his *mind*! Then He found Paul and Luther, and after that, *long* after, the person who introduced *you* to Jesus Christ!

And here we are, you and I, sitting down in the midst of conditions which we *know* are all wrong, wondering why God allows such things to *be*. There's only *one* reason: He's being *kept out* of the picture,—sometimes quite deliberately! There are too few people around the place who are in any sense at all at His disposal!

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I wish you would *take your difficulties* whatever they are, —the world's too for that matter,—and ask yourself how near an approach God has been able to make to them by way of your own life. The things that stand between us and happiness are such common, human things: the *selfishness* that won't share anything it has; the *sensitive-ness* that allows so many things to hurt it, and never tries to understand or correct; the *resentment* that grows up out of wounded feelings, and makes life so bitter; the *loneliness* that stalks about waiting for other people to minister to it; the *dissatisfaction* that would rather kick over the traces than attempt any remedy. And we think they are all just inevitable. It turned out so with us. Friendship isn't what we thought it was; and the Church isn't what we thought it was; and marriage, and business,—God, why should it be like this! Isn't there *anything* we can do?

Yes, we can be the means He has of redeeming all that! "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, put yourselves at His disposal". Quit *talking* about it. Quit praying about it, and singing about it. *Do* it. *You'll* see whether or not day by day He will make His purposes clear to you. All of our modern and well-advertised perplexity, which would have you believe that we don't *know* what He wants, is ridiculous nonsense; it's nothing but a cover for a generation that's self-willed and doesn't care! Let's be frank.

We are living in a day which has *peril enough* of its own, without our adding to it. If you think the solution is going to come in the realm of politics, or by way of a new economic theory, you are not even in *sight* of the truth. It's going to come when human life gathers its things together and swings back into some decent neighborhood to God's intent. And you and I are *helping* either to speed up that process or to

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retard it. *That's* why I want to know how near *your* problem He's getting. Is it *you* for what *you're* after, or is it *you* for what *He's* after? "I heard", writes Isaiah, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go? Then said I, Send me". Isn't there something somewhere He can come close enough to touch by *your* going?

III. *You will find*,—the apostle keeps on pleading, you will find, if only you are willing, that He will transform at its source your way of looking at things, until you come at it all with a different mind and another sort of conscience entirely. Do you suppose that by this time we are sufficiently tired of the old to *welcome* a change like that? It's a tragic *picture*, this picture of God waiting about for every generation to grow weary of trying everything else, hoping that perhaps at the end they will *like* a change! *In all good reason* we have gone at Life *our* way long enough. We have given all the old methods *more* than a fair chance. We have seen what comes of nationalism in the world, of jealousy, and of the will to have our own at any price. "They *owe* it to us; *let them pay!*" We have seen what comes of business run for profit, of selfishness, of social pride and place-winning, of all the lines of demarcation we build up between us as barriers. We have seen in our own lives what comes of *bitterness* and sensitiveness and resentment and aloofness,—all this travelling of our own lonely road where there ought to be love and fellowship. God *knows*,—none of it makes for happiness; and He knows that every one of us is guilty of it, and nobody's much worse than anybody else. *Aren't* we *tired*? Can't we share something that's better? Isn't there any *other* way of looking at things?

*Do you remember* how Jesus once startled Peter with that other way? The grizzled old fisherman had thrown up his



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hands in horror at the thought of the cross: "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" And Jesus turned on him with sudden violence. It was like being back in the wilderness again, and hearing the devil whisper! "Get thee hence, Satan!"—and His eyes flashed: "You haven't God's outlook, but man's!"

I wonder sometimes if that isn't all that's necessary,—His point-of-view,—His vantage-ground, "from which to look at the world", some deeper, higher, longer, broader, "arc through which our thoughts may swing"?

What is it that's *going to hold* us, now that Life has come to such a pass? Not machines, not statistics. What is it if it isn't what we have seen in this Christ of all that *ought* to be,—seen it perhaps for one visioned moment as *God* sees it? Not plans, no theories, dreams!—like God's! We think they are empty, futile things,—and they are hands and ropes, if only we won't sneer at them and throw them off,—as Esau did one day because he was hungry, and the world seemed to him like a place where *any* purpose was silly that didn't satisfy your appetite!

There *was* a day, wasn't there?—when this Galilean Jesus began to *pursue you*, began to haunt you out of all your drab, uninteresting little hiding-places, never in all the world to leave you alone again; a day when without knowing whether His way of looking at Life was true or not you *struck out* through the dark with nothing but that clean radiance to go before you; a day when you *threw up your head* with your nostrils wide scenting the battle, for a brave fling at something Galilean? And then the fine upward sweep of it seemed to level out. The music fell into slower rhythm and minor keys. You had been a Christian about it all until you were well sick of it, and the shine had worn off. *I* know—but don't give it over! For God's sake, don't give it over!

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Don't bury it out of sight just because you think you stand alone: Christ stood alone! Don't let it fade because all the world seems quite heedless and deaf, or lose faith in God because Life seems to exult in trampling you under its feet as it goes callously about its business: it strode over Him in utter abandon, selling its wares, waging its wars. But well-nigh all the good that has ever come to it grew out of that hour when one Man's dream held, and He closed His eyes on a love-haunted world,—His dream of Life and God and all that *ought* to be!

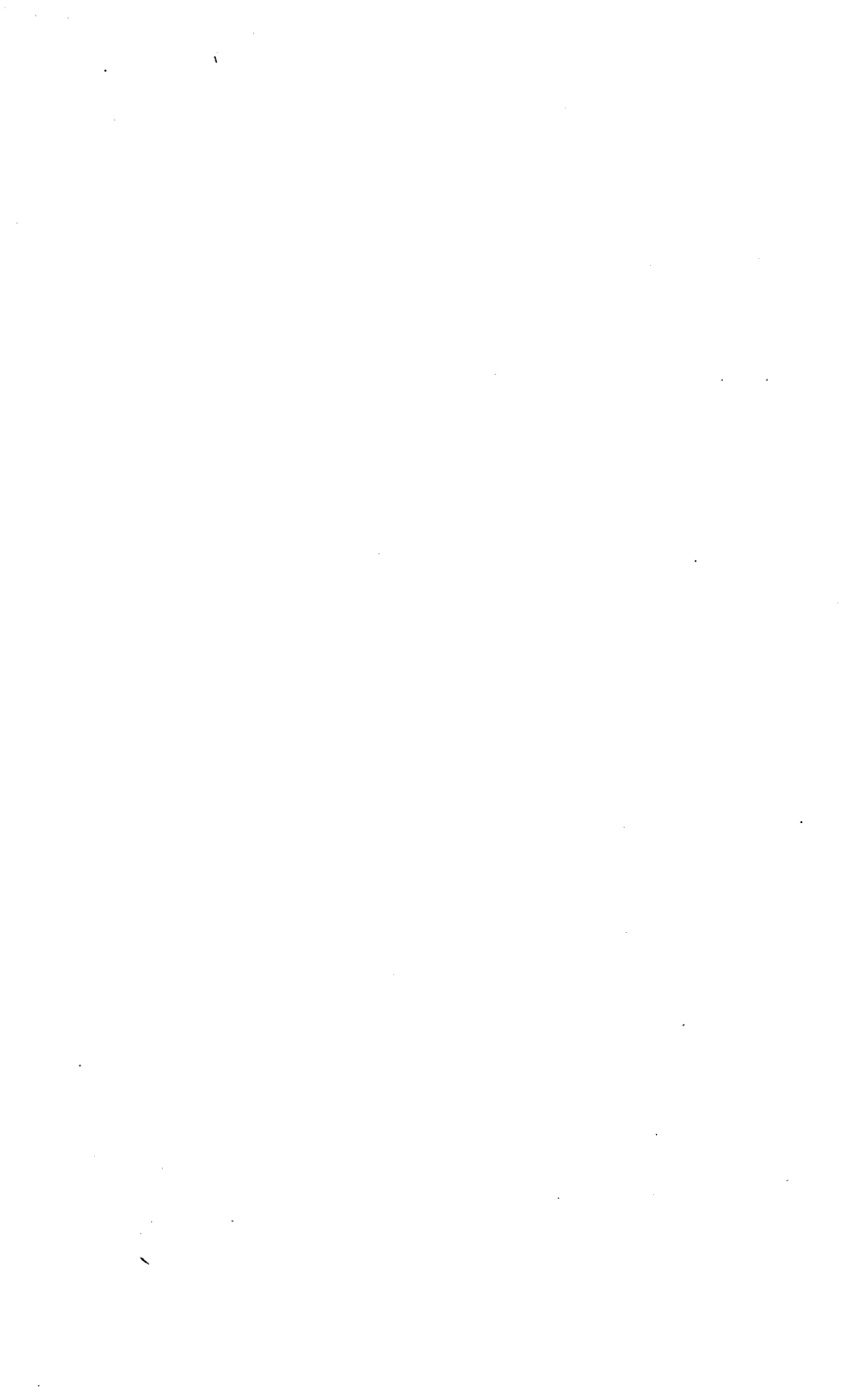
It may mean *staying on behind*, like this little Jew, when everybody else is gone, and holding the line,—friends that won't stick,—even *God* apparently not lifting a finger. Paul *died*—before this Nazarene did anything about it much! But he kept his face stubbornly toward the things he had seen the day he looked eye to eye with Christ; and because he stood so firmly in the night like that, and could be killed but not routed, the *day* dawned,—*God's* day, that He had in His heart!

*Step up* by His side and look again. That may be all you need!

Let's *read* this once more now, shall we?

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you put yourselves body and soul at His disposal, which is the *way* to worship Him. Don't model yourselves after the changing fashions of the world, but let Him transform at its source your way of looking at things,—so that you may be able in your own experience to discern and prove His will, how good and pleasing and utterly complete it is.

*That's how* order two thousand years ago came out of chaos! It's *more* than a dream. It's flesh and blood. It's Paul. It's You—at your Best!



A GUEST AT THE DOOR

*by*

THE REV. RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD, D.D., LL.D.

*"THE nation waits for the initiative of Christian leadership. . . . The fulfillment of America's need will come in ways as certain to be made clear in due season as they are unpredictable at this moment, if and when there are enough real Christians in this country to leaven and mould popular opinion as a whole."*

## A GUEST AT THE DOOR

by

THE REV. RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD, D.D., LL.D.

TEXT—Revelation iii. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

CHRIST means God to us. The heart of the Gospel is the faith that God is like Jesus. The figure of Christ is the picture of God in the frame of human living. Any attitude in which we see that figure is an attitude which we are justified in attributing to God Himself.

The most widely accepted idea of God has always been that He is a masterful intruder upon our affairs. Men have commonly thought of Him as spying and chastising, moving mankind about like pawns on a chessboard, roaring His rage in the thunder, and smiting with the lightning. That pre-Christian notion, borrowed by Christian Europe from the myths of Jove, has disfigured the outline of the Eternal One even in the minds of multitudes within the Church. It is responsible for a sullen antagonism to Him beneath a superficial veneration, which has made many acts of worship insincere and futile. There is nothing gracious, inviting, devotion-inspiring about such a concept. If this misrepresentation of God were true, and He were always forcing Himself in to interfere unasked in our lives, we should do well to resent His power and hate Him. Omnipotence does not excuse bad manners.

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But that idea of God was never derived from observing Jesus. And Jesus is the key we Christians have for unlocking the mystery of the divine nature. Any idea of God which is not derived from him is at least inadequate, and is as likely as not to be false. It is strange and moving to find in that weird work of an eccentric religious genius, the Book of the Revelation, a more perfect likeness of Jesus as the Gospels show him than even the Gospels offer in so small a compass. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"—the etching is complete, a masterpiece of subtle chiaroscuro, bathed in the waning light of early evening at the supper hour, with not one waste stroke of the etcher's stylus. We see the whole scene. We recognize that this renders completely and tenderly the characteristic attitude of Jesus toward his fellow-men. It was a part of his moral nature to have impeccable manners,—the modesty and considerateness which no man can help showing whose heart is both strong and gentle. And the characteristic attitude of Jesus must be God's attitude as well.

So we have been wrong in thinking of God as one who bursts the doors of our lives open and rushes in to set the house in such order as He wants, with no respect for any man's privacy. Behold, He stands at the door and knocks. He is always at the door,—never farther away than the threshold. But He will never come any nearer unless we ask Him to. We can shut Him out and keep Him waiting and do what we please without regard for the unwelcome Caller on the doorsill, if we want to.

Why should we want to? Why should any man want to keep God out of his life? Are we so happy, then, and so secure, and so confident, that we need nothing this Guest might bring us? Are we so satisfied with the permanence and

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dependableness of human affections that it would irk us to admit the only entirely dependable Friend to our houses and our hearts? It is the most tragic anomaly of human living, that we so often and so stubbornly refuse to let in Him in whose comradeship alone we can be truly and enduringly blessed.

To be sure, we do let God in to some of our houses. But they are principally our public buildings. We let God in to our Churches, for instance. We cannot very well shut Him out, there; for they are His Churches, too. Sometimes we do everything we can, in sheer perversity, by our rancorous controversies and our irreverence, to prevent God from feeling at home in our Churches. But with wonderful patience He stays on, just the same. Sometimes our Churches hardly seem worthy to be His abiding-places. They may be of a vast ugly prettiness, or squat and barren, or so small that we wonder whether there can be room for God and His worshippers too. But He is not mindful of architecture, in the places where He is really wanted. And there is this much to be said to our credit, that, whatever our creed, and however radically our private habits may be at variance with His will, we Christians do want God in our Churches.

Somehow I never enter a Church without feeling His presence and receiving help from it. When I visit Montreal, I always find time for a brief call at Notre Dame, where the mediaeval faith of our French Canadian Catholic brethren finds astonishingly florid expression. The interior looks and feels and smells like a child's idea of Fairyland. Yet, surrounded by all that tawdrily painted and gilded wood, the coarse dry fretwork alarmingly suggestive of tinder in the glow of a thousand flickering candles super-added to a glare of electricity, and with whiffs of heavy



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incense teasing my nostrils, despite the revolt of my critical intelligence against what seems to me the pitiful unreality of all these strident accessories, I have never failed to feel the Supreme and Sublime Reality. God is there, unmistakably, and I can kneel and pray as simply as any unlettered habitant.

Last summer, in London, I wandered far down into the fastnesses of the quaint old noisy City, where the financial fate of empires is manipulated in modern structures standing cheek by jowl with relics of the remote forgotten past. And my feet, trained to the habit of poking into Churches, led me into a tiny fane built on a remnant of the Roman wall. They call it All Hallows Church. It is a little box of a place, dingy and musty, the walls fly-blown, the hassocks threadbare, the prayerbooks falling apart. Why don't they tear it down, and make room for progress? That is what we should do in America. But perhaps the Londoners feel what some of us Americans can feel, too, thank God, and what I felt there: the presence of God. Intangible, oddly inappropriate in those surroundings perhaps; yet—He was in that Church. His servants had opened the door to Him many generations ago, and He had come in, and has never since departed. Go to All Hallows Church, and you will find Him.

Or come with me to California. My student ministry opened with a summer incumbency of a little country parish, seven miles from the nearest town, at the foot of the glorious Santa Clara Valley, under the towering tawny slopes of the Coast Range. Our Church was a diminutive wooden building, painted a sort of battleship grey, at a crossroads, opposite the mustard-colored Odd Fellows' Hall. It was there that I first preached the Word. It was there that I, though unordained, assisted a visiting clergyman in my first celebration

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of the Holy Communion. I shall never forget how I felt on those two occasions. I was so nearly overwhelmed that I was exhausted for a long time afterward. On both occasions the chancel was banked with great masses of sweet peas, pouring out their intense fragrance into the hot sunshine. To this day I cannot catch that odor anywhere without a wave of that same feeling coming over me. What was it? Certainly I was not afraid of the twenty or thirty kindly farm people in the pews. But—God was there. That graceless structure, which might have been a barn if it had not been a chapel, was filled with His presence. I am sure He is still there. I should like to go back and see.

But why go so far afield? He is here in the Old South, too. Our fathers let Him in, and it is not we assuredly who will put Him out. God is in our Churches. Has He the entrée anywhere else among us?

Oh, yes, we let Him in on most occasions of public ceremony. His name is invoked daily in the Congress and our Legislatures. But the chaplains' prayers are required to be short. The lawmakers dispose of God in two minutes or less, before they get down to business. His name is on some of our coins: "In God we trust." Some of us are so dollar-minded, however, that it might be more truthful to change that phrase ever so slightly: "The God we trust in." We often speak of ourselves, on patriotic occasions, as a Christian nation, unless there happen to be Jews present. But the Jews are not less Christian than many of us Gentile Americans, and some of them are a great deal more so. It were better to give up our Christian terminology and really worship God with devout Jews, than just to use words and let it go at that.

Yet some of us set great store by these nominal acknowl-

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edgments. There was a storm of protest because God was not mentioned in the Treaty of Versailles. Considering what sort of Treaty it was, one ought rather to have been thankful for less hypocrisy than in the similar pacts concluded at Vienna in God's name in 1815. Some years ago I used to receive circulars regularly from some gentleman in Pennsylvania who wanted to have the Federal Constitution amended to recognize Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. If he had had his way, would America have been redeemed by that gesture?

Do you suppose that God cares about being let in only when there is a crowd and for a few formal moments, like a man on the fringe of society who gets asked to big balls and receptions but never has a look-in on intimate dinners? Behold, God stands at the door and knocks. Not at the door of the Church; He is in the Church already. Not at the door of convention halls; He knows He will be briefly admitted there, and then promptly bowed out and forgotten. But at the door of the house where we live, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. And our house will never be happy until we let Him in. For His presence is the true blessing of every house.

He wants to come in to our business and social life. But we are busy making money, or perhaps nowadays chiefly wishing that we could. Money-making on a scale respectable in modern America means keeping your wits about you every minute, or the other fellow will get ahead of you. We cannot take time for God; and He might not understand some of our methods,—they would take a good deal of explaining. We are out for a good time in our spare moments. And in this decade it doesn't pay to be too particular as to how you

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do it, if you really want to enjoy yourself. We are not decorous like the Victorians; no one stands on ceremony today, and the sky is the limit. God really wouldn't fit in to our modern atmosphere of pleasure, would He? We can hardly ask Him in, out of consideration for His feelings. He would be uncomfortable.

He wants to come in to our political life. And, considering the way things have been going in politics, especially since the War, it might not be a bad idea to answer when God knocks at the portals of party conclaves and the Capitol. He is reputed to have wisdom, and that is more than can be said of most of our politicians. But, even so, we cannot let Him in. For we are patriots. Our loyalty belongs wholly to our own country. We are all out for America first. Lower the tariffs? Forgive the debts? Even try to understand how any fairminded statesman of any other country could possibly suggest such measures, when the law is all on our side? Clean out corruption, check up incompetence, get rid of jobbery, adopt party platforms which mean what they say? Certainly not! Our party and our country would soon be sunk if we went on in that way. If God were admitted, He would be urging visionary notions like the Brotherhood of Man, sincere good will among nations, and the Kingdom of Heaven. Obviously the suggestion that we open the door of our councils to Him is impracticable.

God wants to come in to our interracial relations. We all know that race contacts are causing more and more friction in the modern world, and race conflicts are brewing. But we cannot have God interfering with us in the assertion of our pre-eminent rights. We are white, Nordic, and, what is more, Anglo-Saxon. And He is prejudiced against us. At least, He

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is not prejudiced for us. Unfortunately, the Negroes and the Asiatics are His children too. But what would become of us if there were a fair deal all around? Would you want your daughter to marry a black man? Don't reply by hinting that your daughter might not want to, and that even if she did the black man might object. We must be hard-boiled on these weighty matters. The white race forever! And God help the other races. We don't want His help. We will stand on our own feet and look out for ourselves.

And yet—can we look out for ourselves? What happens to people who refuse to let God in to the house of their daily living; who, in business and society and politics, in international affairs and interracial relations, insist on following their own devices, heedless of the decrees of Heaven? Greece and Rome, and before them Egypt and Assyria and Babylon, and after them Napoleonic France and Hohenzollern Germany, have tried it; and we know what happened to them. Mortal madness, stark ruin, overthrow and destruction—these are portended by the obstinacy which keeps the divine Guest waiting at the door, instead of inviting Him in for counsel, direction, and aid.

And when He does come in, He never advises folly or suicide. He is at least as concerned for His hosts as they are for themselves. In every phase of their living, He is capable and willing to point out the policy which will work out to the best interest of all, and to the detriment of none. We are Americans, but we are also Christians. We know that the paths of selfish arrogance lead men and nations but to the grave. And it is life we crave for our country, not death. If our country is to live, God must come in, and the door must be opened by us Americans for His entrance. For it is

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in Him that we live and move and have our being. Who shall open the door?

The nation waits for the initiative of Christian leadership. Thoughtful Christians will always be in a minority. But every order of society, and especially democracy, is always governed by a thoughtful minority. The fulfilment of America's need will come in ways as certain to be made clear in due season as they are unpredictable at this moment, if and when there are enough real Christians in this country to leaven and mould popular opinion as a whole.

So it rests back finally upon individuals,—upon you and me. The most essential contribution we can make individually to the national cause lies not in immediate and direct civic action, but in opening the doors of our own lives to God, who stands at the door and knocks. With Him as our honored house-Guest, we shall know how to be true Christians; with enough of us true Christians, America will know how to frame her designs and carry them through on lines of enduring strength and spacious, bounty-filled amplitude.

It is not hard to let God in. He comes to us in the figure of the man Jesus, with whom we already have some acquaintance; with whom we can establish an uplifting and fruitful intimacy, if we will. He walks through the pages of the Gospels, which lie before us for our perusal if we care to know through and through the story they tell, the words of life and light they report. Out of the pages of the Gospels he walks into our very hearts, to live and breathe there, and change our aims and ennoble our desires and guide our every step, if we will let him. And when we ourselves are Christ-guided, then we are become a part of the Christian nucleus, the body of Christ at work in the body politic, which

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shall yet save America from the woes which policies of pagan self-seeking invite and render inevitable.

"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Let us keep him waiting no longer, in the darkness and the cold. Let him in, and our hearts and homes and land will be warm and bright with his transfiguring presence.

**FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS**

*by*

**THE REV. CHARLES TREXLER, D.D.**



***I**T IS fitting that this book should include Dr. Trexler's re-emphasis of the power of prayer based on the faith that moves mountains.*

## FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS

by

THE REV. CHARLES TREXLER, D.D.

TEXT—Mark xi. 23. *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

EVERY Christian prays. Prayer is as vital to his spiritual existence as breathing is to the body. It is the atmosphere which invigorates the soul—without prayer the soul shrivels and starves. But there is a wide difference between “praying” and “saying one’s prayers”. In Damascus, the command came to Ananias, “Arise and go into the street called Straight and inquire for one Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth.” It would appear that it was unusual for Saul to pray, yet he had been “among the strictest of the Pharisees”. Undoubtedly he had learned to pray at his mother’s knee, in the synagogue and at the corners of the streets: but he never really prayed until he came into living contact with Jesus on the Damascus road and discovered that “no man cometh unto the Father but through Jesus.” From this great crisis Paul began to experience that which he later instilled in his disciples—“Pray without ceasing.”

As prayer is the atmosphere in which a Christian grows, so faith is the infallible test of true prayer. Here we must be careful not to confuse faith with credulity. This is often the

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case with persons who are not sympathetic with Christianity. There is nothing unreasonable about faith. We are not asked to believe anything which is contra-rational. "Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen." Faith, then, is based on evidence and is tested by that which it expects.

With this statement as to the true meaning of prayer, it is inspiring to hear again the clear-cut promise of Christ in the text—"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." This is a very large order, isn't it? It is startling in its rich promise. "What things, soever ye desire." In these days of dire need and gaunt hunger, we wonder what He can mean. We have the finest exposition of this unlimited promise in Jesus' own wonder-working ministry. As He comes from the Mount of Transfiguration, He said to the father of the demoniac boy, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth". To the Syro-Phoenician woman, pleading for her daughter—"O, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." From these statements and many others in the ministry of Jesus, it is obvious that it is not only a belief that God *can*, but also that He *will* answer prayer in the measure as we expect.

This is entirely consistent with common sense. "Nothing attempted nothing gained" is a proverb which finds its vivid illustration in the lives of many disappointed persons. The wise teacher sets a high standard for the scholars—and expects much. It is the philosophy of life which dominates the experience of every successful man. Confidence begets confidence in every province of life. It is not strange that Jesus said to His followers—"He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that dili-

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gently seek Him." Even in a matter so trifling as a trip in the subway we exercise this reasonable expectancy. We take our seat in the train without even a thought about a motorman or the ability of the train to transport us. We just expect that we shall be carried to our destination. Every province of life—every day frequently brings us some illustration of this expectancy which we unconsciously exercise. Surely it is not unreasonable that an Almighty Father and a Loving Lord should ask of us a similar confidence in Him.

To the faithful Christian, however, there is an even firmer foundation for this expectancy. The Scripture abounds with promises addressed to all who pray with confidence. Just as assuring as the text is the promise of Jesus as He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." You notice there is no reservation: no element of uncertainty. Always the definite assurance, shall, shall, shall! And then, lest there might still be some doubt, He continues, "For everyone that asketh, receiveth; He that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocks it shall be opened."

Or take the other promise made to His followers—"If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." How poverty-stricken we are because our weak faith places limitations upon promises which our Master does not intend. Is it not true that we consider these promises as exaggerated, just because we are overwhelmed with the generosity of God and lack the faith to apprehend these gracious promises? It would be well if we would frequently refresh our minds with the fact that "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof", and also "consider the lilies of the field and the

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birds of the air" that we might gain new hope and a greater faith in the Father's loving care for His creatures.

To fortify us still more in faith we can call upon the vast numbers of faithful Christians who can certify to God's ability and eagerness to answer the prayer of faith. Almost a century ago there lived in the manufacturing city of Bristol, England, a man named George Müller, who became deeply interested in the numerous neglected children on the streets of the city. In cooperation with some friends they determined to establish an orphanage in the city. Not having any funds he began with a few children taken into his home. He determined that the home should be provided solely by prayer. Not any one on this side of heaven was to be solicited for funds. The home multiplied until there were five homes caring for two thousand children. For almost a century now the thousands of children that have found shelter in this orphanage are definite evidence of the manner in which God honors and answers the prayers of a man who expects great things from God. But Bristol is across the ocean. In a hospital, within ten minutes' walk, a nurse had become infected in the course of her ministry of mercy. The malignant virus has gone from her finger into the hand—the arm—until it has spread through the system and they despair of her life—"surely the arm must be amputated" as they had removed the finger. Upon hearing that her Pastor had been to see her, the distinguished specialist who was treating her said somewhat cynically, "It will take more than prayer—nothing short of a miracle can save that arm." The nurse expected help from the Divine Physician. A few days later, to the surprise of the surgeon, he found her temperature and swelling subsided and the patient resting in comfort. "Nothing short of

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a miracle", said the surgeon. Of course it is: every answer to prayer is a miracle.

The greatest evidence that we can have is that of personal experience. David sometimes wavered in his faith, yet exultingly sings—"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his trouble": he explained by saying that his "expectation was from God". The disciples were discouraged for they had toiled all night and had taken nothing. The Master commanded that they should "Launch out into the deep" and let down their nets. "At His word" they obeyed and there came the great draughts of fishes. It always comes to those who take the Master at His word. Our lives are weak and our resources small, not because He fails, but because we lack the confidence to ask.

Yet faith in itself has no value. It is profitable only as it unites us with God. God is the source of all strength, spiritual and physical. It is our faith which is the means of bringing that infinite Love, with all that it implies, into our lives.

Standing before the Master with his demoniac boy, the frantic father pleaded, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." If Thou canst? There was the element of doubt—but also a certain expectancy. "All things are possible to him that believeth," said Jesus. And the father cried out with the prayer that often comes to our lips, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And he experienced the fulfillment of the promise—"If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."



LIFE'S SCHOOLING

*by*

THE REV. ELIAS BROWN VAN ARSDALE



WHAT is the purpose of life?

*"Life is, truly, an education. It is wholly insufficient to consider it only a play or a strife for temporal prizes or a test of one's fitness for heaven, when all through its span the soul may be accumulating heavenly treasure out of its earthly experiences."*

*"Does it seem incredible that out of the very elements from which men deduce their philosophies of despair and futility, Christ gathered his teachings of faith and love and God, Christ built his promise of the abounding life and beacons a weary world to it?"*

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TEXT—Matthew 11:29. "*Learn of Me.*"

THESE words of the Master ring with a challenge and a plea for humanity today. "Learn of me". The Teacher of love and brotherhood cries out to a world at the feet of graven images. "Learn of me". The Master of LIFE pleads with men spent with the search for life where there is none.

Christ explored the full range of life and the tools of His teaching were life's everyday incidents with people, with work and play, with nature, and all the affairs and interests that filled, and still fill, the minds of men. From homely contacts, simply and without conceit, He drew the essence of truth, the divine fire of eternal beauty, the spiritual vision on man's great promise. He transmuted experience into teachings so simple, so utterly true that the world with its penchant for complexity and its suave distrust of ultimate honesty, dares not in two thousand years accept as guides. Jesus Christ taught of life and right living.

Why have we life? How are we to use it? What are we to work out of it? The deepest thinking of men revolves about such questions. Philosophers ruminate—and disagree. Scientists delve deep for the origins of life—and fail. But to practical men, conscious that we *have* life, the concern is to know what to do with our lives, what to strive for in our living. "What is my life?" asks the man of despair lacking

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the sense of any discoverable answer. "What is my life?" asks the man of spirit confident in his faith and belief that there *is* an answer.

Is life a play? We sometimes speak of the drama of life.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts."

Circumstances change like the shifting of painted sets. Ineffable forces play upon us so that we sometimes seem forced by some unseen director into assigned parts in a world of make-believe; like puppets on a string moved thus and so with no volition of our own: touched now to laughter, now to tears, as befits the moment's prompting for merry comedy or stern tragedy. Watching the play of lights and shadows across the surface of life, the swift rise and fall of fortunes in human experience, the fickle passions of mass movements, the thought of life's pageantry sometimes crowds out of our minds all other possibilities.

Yet we are not satisfied with life as a play. Our character is our own. There is no sham about it. We live and move in a world of reality, not of shadows. Tears and laughter are genuine reactions to experiences that deeply touch our souls. With its noble art the stage may hold up a mirror, but we know that life itself is substance and not reflection, and the marks that life gravens upon our faces and hearts are indelibly and forever part of ourselves—not the make-up and false wig of an actor.

Is life a conflict, then? Does it draw from arena and battlefield its noblest inspirations? Men arrayed against one another—the race to the swift—the battle to the strong or

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the cunning! Each individual or group must guard zealously its own quick interests, suspicious of each move the other fellow makes lest it be a feint for some advantage.

This conception of life today moves vast portions of humanity. To them life is a strife for the prizes of earth. Nothing else. Its value is inextricably entangled with opportunities to gain riches. It is a field of battle on which every consideration that opposes, or might conceivably oppose, the aspirant after things—hard, concrete, material things—is trampled down ruthlessly. Education is good only to fit men to outstrip their fellows in this soulless competition for riches. The chief requirement of the arts is that their products sell well. Everything bears its price—even manhood. This is the quantity theory of life, and success in the living of it is measured by the abundance of things owned.

But what when this philosophy fails? What when the machinery of our material well-being breaks down? Where then is life's meaning for those who have lost the touch of immaterial values? Can it be that our compromise with selfishness and cunning has so dulled our perceptions of moral and spiritual truths that today we have lost our sense of the life abundant?

Now without question life *is* a battle, but we are participants side by side with each other against hard circumstances that try the mettle of men. The prizes fought for eternally are the spiritual trophies of courage and faith, fraternity and hope—the components of true wisdom and the enduring objectives of life's schooling.

Religion has always protested the ideas of life as a pageant or as a conflict for selfish gains. But religion has itself sometimes laid emphasis on another view that is also inadequate. Religion has sought meaning in life as a probation. It has

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set up a laboratory where tests are made to a prescribed formula of fitness—and all that is unfit by this test is rubbish. No; it is far too narrow and discouraging to think of life as only a continuous trial and its hardships a sign of God's disapproval. Though strong men rejoice in the race, weaker men faint with misgiving. Confidently as skilled and reckless soldiers rush into battle, other no less brave hearts dread the conflict. If temptations, toils, sorrows and all the experiences of life are but tests, it becomes impossible for most of us, aware of our weaknesses, to rejoice in these things that may overwhelm and condemn us. We must find in the things we daily meet not that which reveals the abilities and disabilities of our lives only for the sake of judgement, but that which lifts them to greater strength and wisdom. Otherwise the young life overpowered by temptation lacks spirit for recovery; the sad heart borne down by sorrow feels little hope for comfort; and the weary life oppressed with labor's dull routine loses incentive for carrying on.

It is true that life *is* probation and its experiences a test revealing of what stuff we are. But that is not all the truth. Life is more than a mere process of refining pure metal from dross. Its purpose is not to prove men fit, but to *make* them fit—to pass them on to higher and higher attainments.

Life is, truly, an education. It is wholly insufficient to consider it only a play or a strife for temporal prizes or a test of one's fitness for heaven, when all through its span the soul may be accumulating heavenly treasure out of its earthly experiences.

Each of us begins at zero. Each man is set in his place in time. Within him are wrapped endowments, fixed and unalterable, that will distinguish him from his fellows. His

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world surrounds him from infancy. The touch of its elements upon him and his growing reactions to them will reveal and draw out the hidden faculties and powers of his life. Inscrutable influences, like the fingers of an unseen potter, soon shape the formless clay of his mind into the outlines of character—noble or otherwise. All impart their lessons and he makes answer to them all; learning, learning, learning until he completes the course and stands ready to be passed on with honor, if he has been diligent in using the best his environment has afforded or, if he has rejected these gifts, to fall short of the honor he might have claimed.

To us all comes the Master's word: "Learn". "Learn of me," Jesus says, offering Himself as the great Teacher. And so men came to recognize Him as they listened with amazement to His talk and watched in wonder as He passed among them: "Master!" "Teacher!"

Where a man finally arrives through the complex moil of life depends so much upon his choice of the guide he follows. What if one follows life's Master supreme! "Sovereign Seer of time, . . .—poets' Poet, . . .—wisdom's Tongue, . . .—man's best Man, love's best Love, O perfect Life in perfect labor writ, . . .—Jesus, good Paragon, thou crystal Christ."

Consider the lessons to be learned at His feet.

The first concerns each individual. What shall he make of himself? This is the first question in time and the first in importance both for himself and for all who come within his sphere of influence. His answer conditions his own happiness and the quality of his social usefulness. The very adequacy of the social system of which he is part rests on *his* happiness and on the quality of *his* service to it. It is not the

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system that matters most, but the character of men who use the system.

Walter Lippmann, in a recent article on "The New Deal" inquires, "Where shall we find men able and honest enough to do that?" Life's essential lesson is one of character—the effective essence distilled from experience. Character is the great personal possession worth spending a lifetime to gain. Upright character is a soul-expanding force. "Fame is a vapor," Horace Greeley exclaimed, "popularity an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today will curse tomorrow; only one thing endures—character."

In every possible way life schools us to hate evil and to delight in good. Every infraction of immutable law schools us with pain and discomfort, drives us back into the right path. Our own suffering of the consequences of wrong doing, the havoc it wreaks in other lives, teaches us the bitterness of evil. By the joy we ourselves feel in doing the good, true deed, and by the radiated happiness it brings to other lives we come to know the sweetness of the beautiful, the good, the true. But Jesus is our great teacher here, anticipating the course that the cruel buffeting of long ages of time drives man toward inevitably. His experience, His word, His life teach us the utter loathsomeness of selfish and narrow living.

Our nature is set for high moral endeavor, the whole man uttering emphatic protest against every evil deed and joyous approval of every good. Life offers us the same chance to discover and develop the elements of worthy character that it offered Jesus who probed through traditional conformities to the deep springs of life in the heart, in the disposition and spirit of man.

Another lesson life waits to drill us in pertains directly to our relations and contacts with one another. We are social

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beings. Every one from early consciousness finds his life intertwined with others. Therefore the art of living on the best of terms with our fellows assumes rich importance. The home, the church, school, community, state are rooms in which unfold to us in ever widening circles our duties toward brother and neighbor. Their environment expands our affections step by step from self and nearest kin to our brethren afar off. The laws of the state restraining our unwise acts, the memorials of those who have gone before and whose toils and sacrifices have made possible our privileges and gifts, the happiness that comes from making others happy, the contentment arising from friendly associations, all discipline us in that love of neighbor which is the fulfilling of the law. The testimony of our own experience teaches clearly that the path of true social success is not the way of revenge, but of forgiveness; that the true goal of personal endeavor is not to outstrip our fellow worker but to help him, work with him, toward fuller living. "He is greatest among you who is servant of all."

Painfully today the lesson impinges upon our consciousness that no social fabric can stand securely upon a foundation of selfish interests, that a competitive world is a world on the brink of chaos. Really, the proportion of Christ's lesson of service that we have absorbed in the texture of our social relations measures our true social progress. We have gained some headway. Even in the face of the jungle law of commerce the man who seeks success has found it securely bound up with some contribution to the needs of his community. But we have far to go before Christ's great law of love finds effective adoption. G. K. Chesterton answered the charge that Christianity has failed with simple penetration:—because it has never yet been tried.



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Has Christ's great law of love pervaded our social life? To the members of the home circle, to His disciples, to the stranger by the way, to His very foes that sought to destroy Him, went forth from Christ's heart unceasing love. And Christianity is the continuing effort to sustain the spirit of that love against the mighty pressure of selfish scorn, passionate hatreds and gnawing revenge.

Yet, neither the perfecting of character nor the love of our fellow men is Christ's ultimate lesson of life. These are but stepping stones to God. The highest of all life's lessons is to know and trust God. Jesus said, "This is life eternal that men should know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

Why do we flutter and weaken and fail in our grasp of this lesson? Why do we scorn the lessons of life itself, abjure the teachings of Him who reveals the depth and beauty and power of those lessons? Not by searching shall we find God; not by research and speculation, but by cherishing the spirit of a life attuned to the deep resonance of spiritual things—a life respondent to that eternal hope and courage and faith that provides the foundation of true living. We must tune in with that spirit to hear the inaudible voice that commands the universe, to perceive the invisible presence that is ultimate reality. Along the road of clean character and unsparing devotion the pure and loving heart brings us to Him.

That is the essence of life that eludes, the vision of God impenetrable to an age that popularizes the dregs of passion and pride, and calls them life; that clamors for license and rejects the restraints of strengthening discipline, and calls it living; to an age that premiums the selfish use of endowments in utter disregard of humanity's claims. The penalty of such living is subitaneous despair. Its assets are spurious,

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its gold dross, its prophets professors of folly. Since life persists, men chastened by failure and broken conceits return inevitably to the way of light and truth. But, oh, the wastage of precious life involved; oh, the unneeded cruelties endured!

We live in a world where everything bears the Creator's message to every sensitive spirit. As each page of a book tells its part of the story, every experience of life unfolds life's meaning. Although he may hesitate to say "God", the scientist stands before nature mute in admiration for a perfect intelligence that defies *his* imperfect technique. He finds in the sundered atom and in the farthest star a subtlety that transcends the powers of his finest instruments: "an infinite and eternal energy". Although he dodge the name of God, the artist before some splendor of sea or land and sky stands fixed in the presence of something he cannot canvas: "the Spirit of Beauty." The farmer walks abroad in autumn fields with the signs of death about him, but sows his seed in confidence that the turn of the seasons will give him his harvest. He feels the wonder of the forces of life. So for us all, errant scholars though we be, the Creator packs the universe with messages that teach us the ways of faith and humility.

True living, full living, righteous living drives us to God. Temptation, failure, sorrow, defeat empower our need of Him. When we feel sufficient unto ourself, some bitter temptation teaches us humility. The prizes of earth are enough until some deep sorrow splits the crust of our heart. We glory in proud achievement until some crushing disaster destroys it. Towering ambitions exalt us until some adversity reflects them back, like mocking echoes. Vicissitude strips us

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before the world of all but the consciousness of the need for God. And we find the true meaning of life.

Is this not the answer of truth for the soul's ignorance: arrangement for the soul's disorder, forgiveness for the soul's sin, a fathering love for the soul's loneliness? Does it seem incredible that out of the very elements from which men deduce their philosophies of despair and futility, Christ gathered His teachings of faith and love and God, Christ built His promise of the abounding life and beacons a weary world to it? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest to your souls."



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